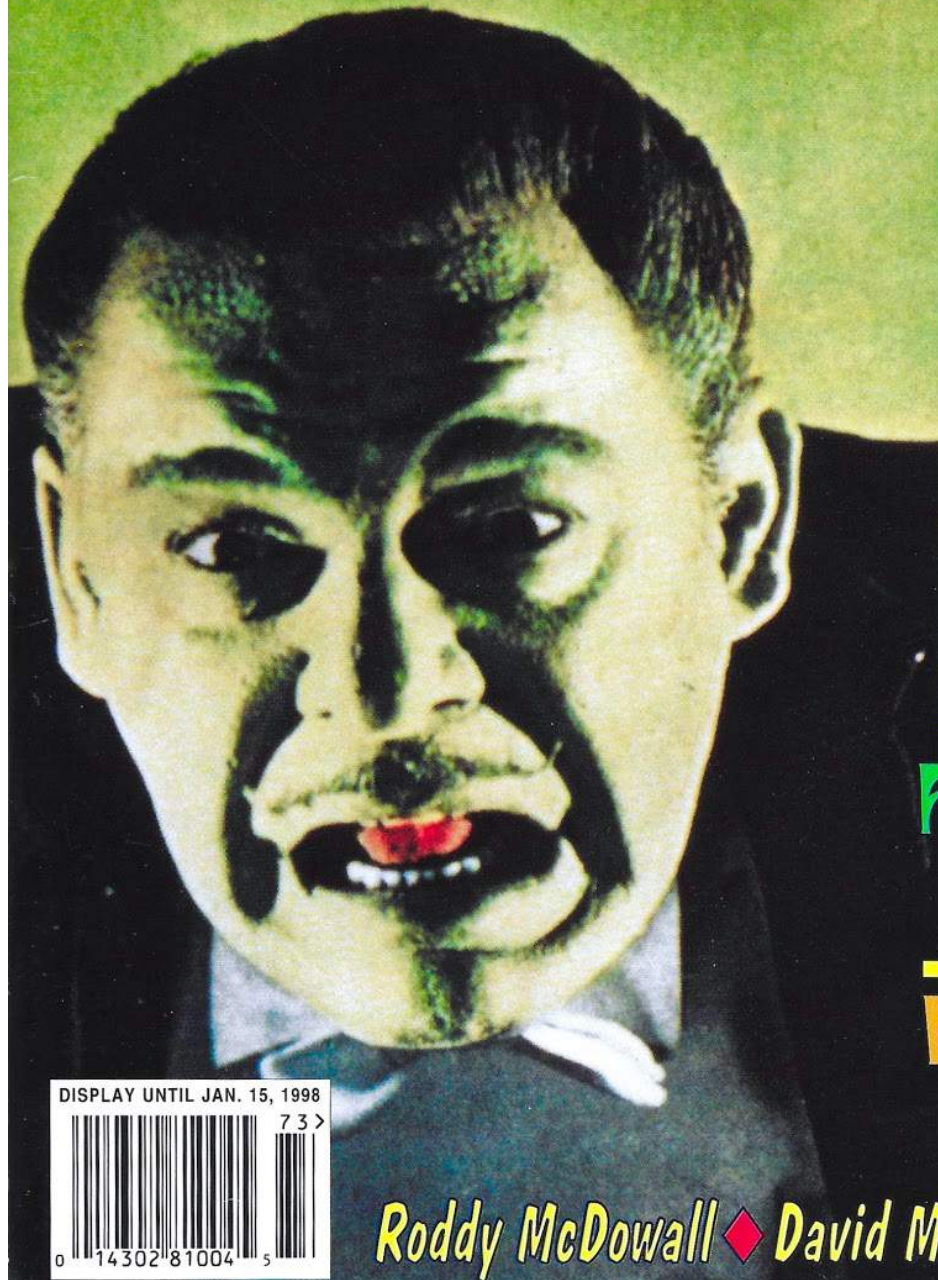


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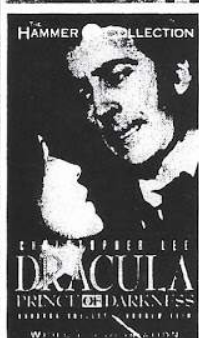
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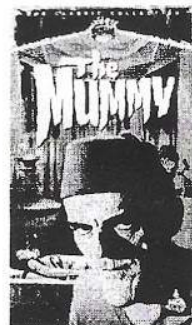
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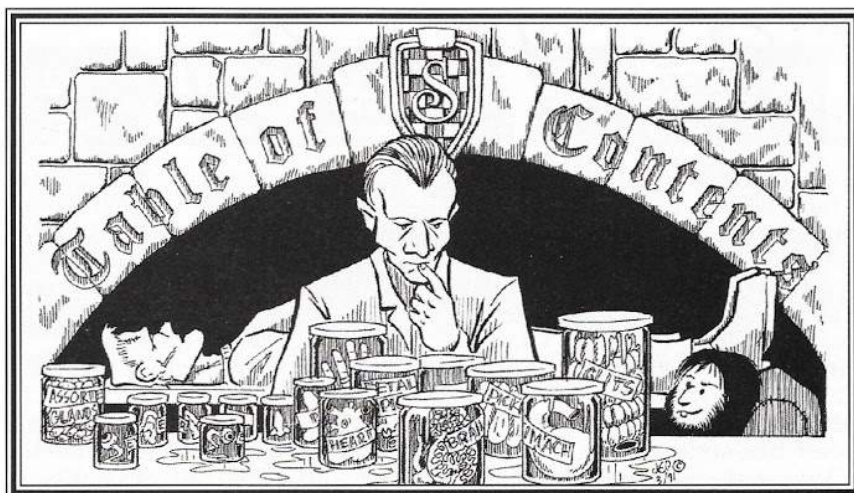


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Features and Departments

- 4 **Scarlet Letters**
- 9 **Frankly Scarlet**
- 15 **Forry's Crimson Chronicles**
- 18 **The News Hound**
- 19 **Inside the X-Files**
- 20 **Saints Alive!**
- 21 **Honey, I'm Home: Universal's House of Frankenstein**
- 22 **More Tales of More Tales**
- 24 **Screen and Screen Again**
- 28 **Whale Hunt: Christopher Bram**
- 34 **Him and Me: A Personal Slice of the Dracula Century**
- 42 **To the Manners Born: David Manners**
- 50 **Our Man on Baker Street**
- 52 **Fright Night: Going to Bed With the Beast Inside**
- 56 **From Collies to Werewolves: Roddy McDowall**
- 61 **Dial "E" for Evil: Stephen Geoffreys**
- 65 **More Monsters, Bigger Closets**
- 66 **Lizard's Leg and Owlet's Wing**
- 68 **A Hunger for Horror: The 1939 Revival of a Genre**
- 75 **Book Ends**
- 82 **Classified**

COVER: Lon Chaney Jr. as the SON OF DRACULA (1943),
Stephen Geoffreys in FRIGHT NIGHT (1985),
Glenn Strange and Boris Karloff in HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1944).

Scarlet Letters

Bob Madison and Drew Sullivan's article, *FLASH GORDON CONQUERS THE LASERDISC* (SS #25) is a great piece of film scholarship and a genuine appreciation of its star, Buster Crabbe (actually Clarence Linden, a University of Southern California graduate and the 1932 Olympic champion in the 400-meter free-style event).

But, along the way, they posit a true *Scarlet Street* mystery and perhaps they'd be interested in resolving it.

They mention *KING OF THE JUNGLE* (1933), an elaborate Paramount production that starred Buster Crabbe as Kasper, The Lion Man. The film was quite similar to Metro's first Tarzan movie, *TARZAN, THE APE MAN* (1932). Indeed, Paramount's publicity campaign for *KING OF THE JUNGLE* pushed Buster Crabbe as Johnny Weissmuller's rival (although, in actuality, they were good friends and laughed at the "rivalry").

Then, Mr. Madison and Mr. Sullivan refer to *TARZAN THE FEARLESS* (also 1933). An independent film producer, Sol Lesser, had obtained the rights to make an independent Tarzan feature, much to the dismay of Edgar Rice Burroughs, who had conveniently forgotten the original 1928 transaction, and Metro, who persuaded Lesser via a money transaction to delay production of *TARZAN THE FEARLESS* (originally *TARZAN THE INVINCIBLE*) until after the release of *TARZAN, THE APE MAN*.

But *TARZAN THE FEARLESS* was shot in a very unusual way, proclaimed to be "revolutionary," as both a 71-minute feature (seven reels), which led into eight two-reel episodes. Unfortunately, many theaters ran the feature without the remaining eight chapters and, of course, most reviewers gave a poor review to a film that seemed so unresolved.

So Buster Crabbe, an excellent Tarzan, got a "golden opportunity" that was poorly handled by its distributor, Principal Distributing Corporation. Blame it

on Paramount, which loaned him to Lesser in the first place and eventually lost him to Universal for their extraordinarily successful *FLASH GORDON*, *RED BARRY*, and *BUCK ROGERS* serials.

But what's become of the missing eight chapters of *TARZAN THE FEARLESS*? Have they just faded into oblivion or are they now irretrievably lost? Buster Crabbe was good enough in the feature installment to justify a search and even possibly a restoration on laserdisc. Hopefully, Mr. Madison and Mr. Sullivan will be interested in providing us with the answer to this mystery.

I'm very grateful for Richard Valley's article, *CHASING MORE TALES*. I'd given up on a sequel to Armistead Maupin's *TALES OF THE CITY* and couldn't understand PBS's reluctance to capitalize on such a stunning success.



But I couldn't believe that *Scarlet Street* had "weathered some complaints over its coverage of the first series." There was already such a deep, dark mystery in the first six hours—the true identity of Mrs. Anna Madrigal—and a deadlier one in the true identity of the upstairs neighbor.

And I got quite a shock from Mr. Valley's comment, "... the philanthropic Beauchamp Day (Thomas Gibson) ... at last gets his comeuppance in *MORE TALES OF THE CITY*." I'd already thought he'd gotten his comeuppance when he was dumped by the magnificent-looking, highly desirable Doctor Jon Fielding (Bill Campbell).

I shudder to think what worse possible blow Armistead Maupin could've devised for him.

Raymond Binacki
Brooklyn, NY

We may be wrong, but as far as we know TARZAN THE FEARLESS is still out there in both feature and serial form and has even been available on video in both formats. If it isn't, we'll doubtless hear about it . . .

I wanted to thank you for the interview with Joel Schumacher and the article *SEX AND THE SINGLE BAT* in *Scarlet Street* #25. Although Schumacher has taken the series in a direction I'm not thrilled with, it was interesting to hear his take on the characters. It's a pity Tim Burton wouldn't agree to continue directing the series—I prefer my bats dark and brooding rather than smirking and skating.

SEX AND THE SINGLE BAT is a great rehash of all the old rumors about Batman and the Boy Wonder. And let's face it—with the names given to the characters (Bruce, Dick, even Robin), how could they be anything but gay?

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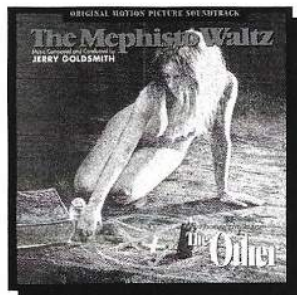
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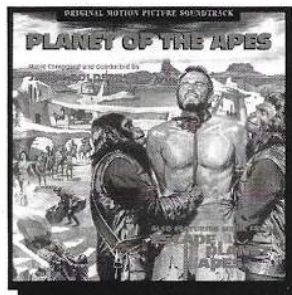
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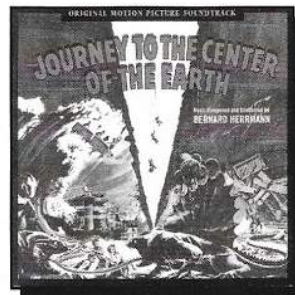
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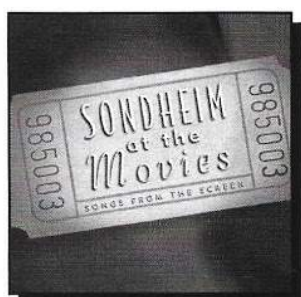
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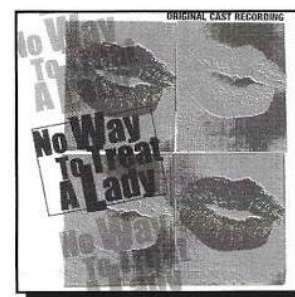
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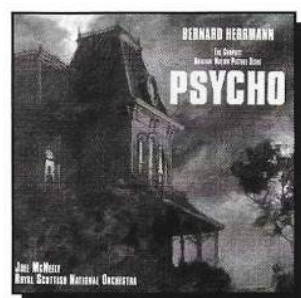


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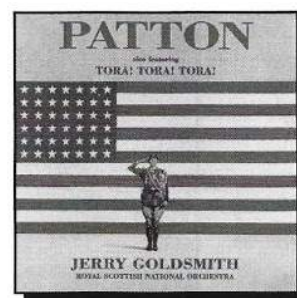
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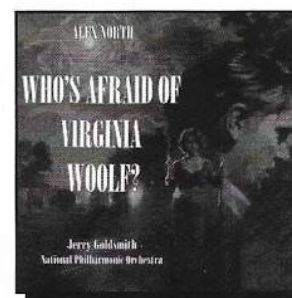
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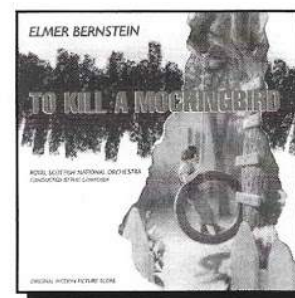
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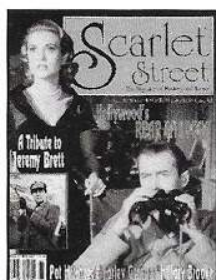
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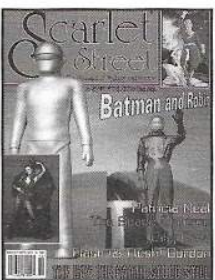
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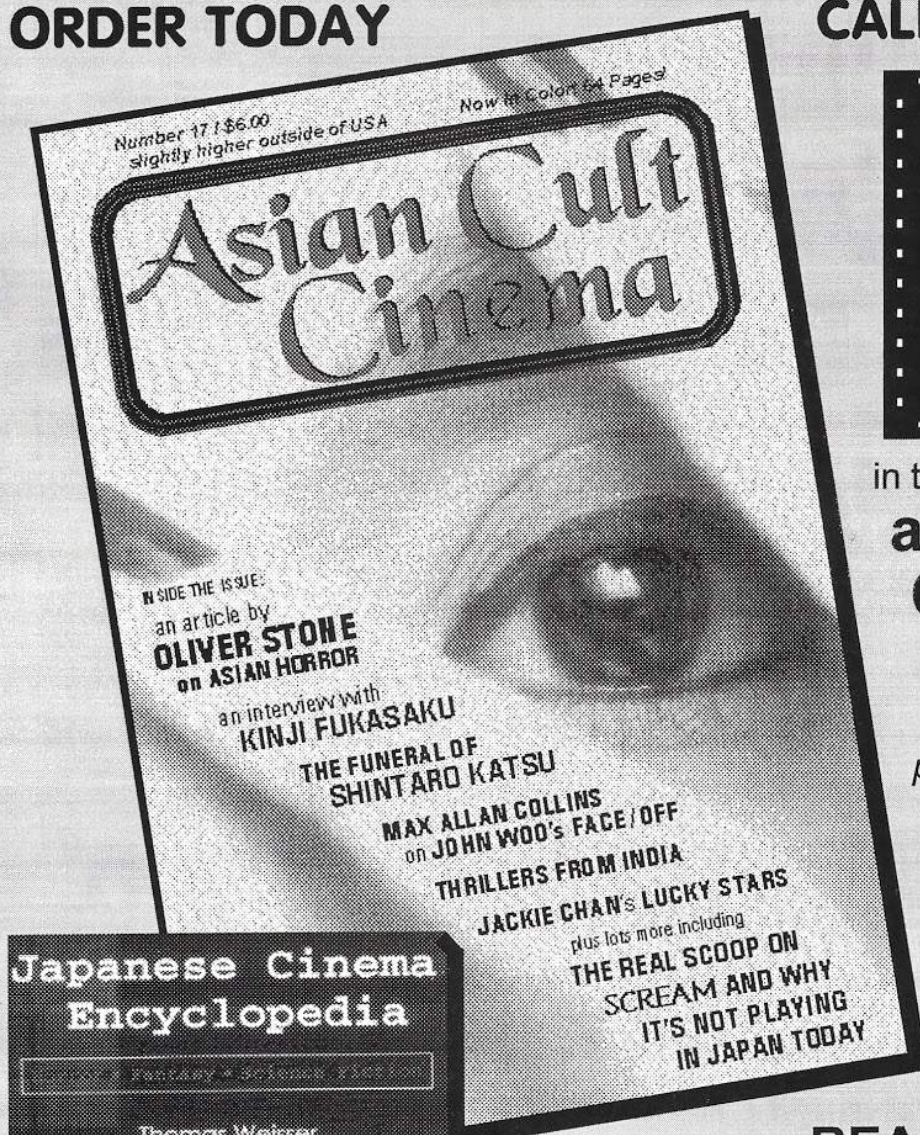
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—Max Allan Collins

Frankly Scarlet



There's big doin's at *Scarlet Street* these days, and a ton of stuff to fit into this spectacular issue, so I've relegated myself to a half-page column this time 'round. I'll be back to my old blabbermouth self in time for our next issue, though—which should make some of you happy and send the rest of you screaming into the night!

Both reactions warm my heart. So does chili . . .

So what's the big news, you ask? (You did ask, didn't you?) Well, *Scarlet Street* has joined forces with Universal Pictures, West Coast Video, and Star Vid-

eo to bring you a wonderful deal: free issues of *Scarlet Street*, available through specially-marked Universal Classic Horror videos on sale at West Coast Video. So drop by your local West Coast—which, oddly enough, you'll find from coast to coast—and look for the special *Scarlet Street* stickers on such immortal titles as DRACULA, FRANKENSTEIN, THE RAVEN, THE MUMMY, THE BLACK CAT, SON OF DRACULA, HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN, INVISIBLE AGENT, and dozens more!

That's not all! You can also win a free one-year *Scarlet Street* subscription by entering our special Sweepstakes! For further info, see the ad on the inside back cover—or just make that trip to the nearest West Coast Video!

He starred with Lugosi in DRACULA! With Karloff in THE MUMMY!! With Karloff and Lugosi in THE BLACK CAT!!! He's David Manners, of course, and *Scarlet Street* is especially proud to bring you an exclusive interview with the 98-year-old former actor. We wanted you, the reader, to feel as



though you were meeting with Mr. Manners yourself, sharing his day and talking about the many different aspects of a very crowded life—and we think we have succeeded. Turn to page 42 for TO THE MANNERS BORN: DAVID MANNERS INTERVIEWED by *Scarlet* newcomer Rick McKay.

Last but not least—you'll note the return of some valued advertisers this issue and a few new ones, too. We urge you to support them. They deserve it, and besides, by supporting our advertisers you're assuring yourself of many more years of *Scarlet Street*!

Richard Valley

SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 4

It's interesting that you mention the underground erotic stories starring Batman and young Dick: I've always wondered if the fact that more of the stories are devoted to those two rather than other heroes wasn't due more to their part in pop culture (thanks to the dreadful television show) than to any uniquely homoerotic subtext in their relationship.

Still, the subtext is there—if you're willing to look.

Michael Lewis

MICLEW@aol.com

Dick Grayson really gets around, it appears. One of our readers reported an erotic story in which Superman cheated on Lois Lane with Wonder Woman—and with Robin the Boy Wonder!

✠

In his essay SEX AND THE SINGLE BAT, Drew Sullivan resurrects Fredric Wertham's old argument that Batman and Robin are gay, but misses, I think, an essential point. Mr. Sullivan writes, "Where Wertham blew it was in thinking, in his typically repressive 1950s

way, that the [wish dream] was necessarily a bad thing . . ."

Well, if we were talking about consensual sex between adult males, no, it wouldn't be. But when Wertham wrote his book, Robin was portrayed in the comics as being maybe 14 years old. (See also Michael Fleisher's Batman encyclopedia; Robin's age seems to have been frozen at about 14 until the mid-'60s.) If this were an adult male having sex with, say, a 14-year-old girl—a minor, for whom he acts as legal guardian, no less—would anyone these days dare to suggest that this wasn't "necessarily a bad thing?"

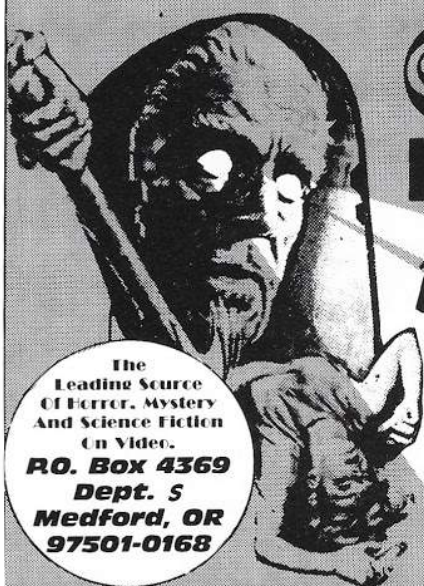
I think it's important we not lose sight of how, and more importantly why, "those rumors about Bruce and Dick" got started. Wertham's agenda in *Seduction of the Innocent* was to paint comics in the most unflattering light possible, and to this end he shrewdly played on the fears and prejudices of his readers—in this case, that old pernicious stereotype of the homosexual as a pedophile who preys on young boys. Worse still, it's a sexual predation by a

parent figure—cynically crafted by Wertham to play on the homophobia of terrified parents across the nation.

And yet Mr. Sullivan—who otherwise does not seem ignorant of Dr. Wertham's work—not only fails to see the full shape of the bogeyman Wertham was constructing in his hysterical treatise, he embraces it as some kind of gay totem for the millennium. Even allowing that later Robins were somewhat older, that 1950s Dick Sprang/Sheldon Moldoff Boy Wonder remains a significant iconographic image—as witness your illustration on page 39. Take a good look at that illo: a grown man declaring his love to a chubby-faced little boy? Practically his adopted son? What's wrong with this picture? Or, more apropos: What could possibly be right with this picture?

This revisionist mythology does no service to the cause of gay rights, and certainly no service to the 60-year history of the Batman (to which, I admit, I have contributed a few adventures over the

Continued on page 14



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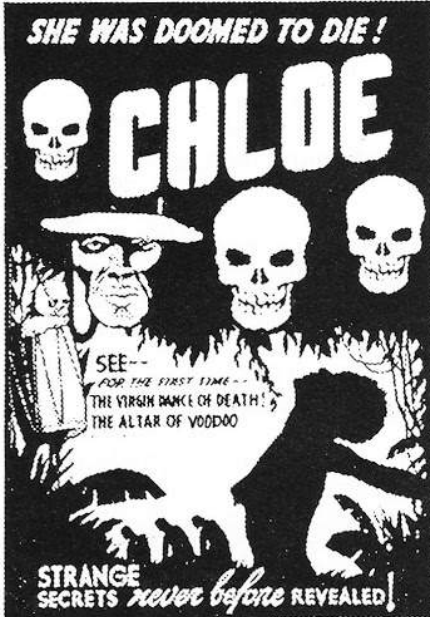
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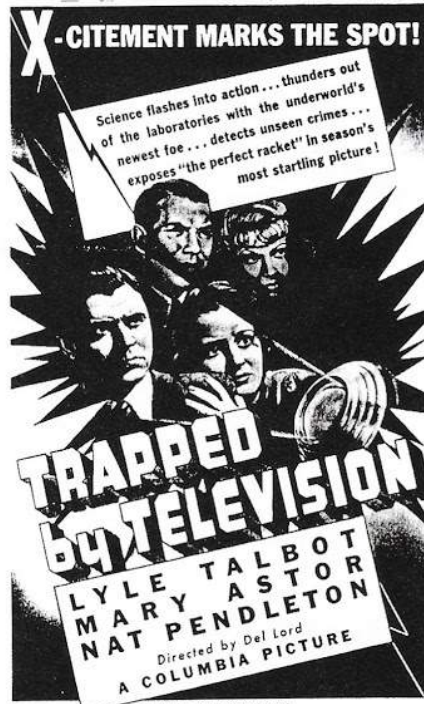
CHLOE* (1934) Olive P. Reed, Howes, Molly O'Day. This is one of the most remarkable low-budget '30s films we have ever come across. It can be broadly described as a romantic voodoo jungle thriller. A grumpy, old black voodoo mistress from the Everglades comes out of the swamp to seek revenge on the white plantation lord she believes responsible for the death of her husband 15 years earlier. Her daughter, Chloe (who could easily pass for white), finds herself torn between a black man and a handsome white foreman. Suddenly evidence surfaces that Chloe may actually be the plantation lord's long lost daughter. Is she? A frenzied, realistic sacrificial voodoo ceremony highlights the climax of this wonderful film that weaves its way through an atmosphere of swamp shacks, alligators, voodoo dolls, snakes, bats, and cypress trees. It reeks with atmosphere. The aspect of inter-racial romance on screen was unheard of for its time. A charmingly lyrical orchestral score underlies most of the film and adds a flavor that's strikingly similar to **WHITE ZOMBIE**. **CHLOE** is a crude film in some ways, yet this adds to an overall moody charm that has seldom, if ever, been achieved by another film of such obvious low budget trappings. A fascinating piece of rare cinema. 16mm. H245

DIE, MONSTER, DIE (1965) Boris Karloff, Nick Adams, Suzan Farmer, Freda Jackson. An AIP classic! Karloff plays the lord of a strange manor around which all life—plant and animal—seem to be mutating into hideous monstrosities. Adams is the meddling American who has come to rescue Boris' daughter. He discovers a large, radioactive meteorite in the cellar. Based on the H.P. Lovecraft classic, "The Colour Out of Space." NOTE: This is the original HBO pre-record that is no longer available in stores. It's recorded at SP. We have a limited quantity, so order now. Color, from 35mm. H247

DAUGHTER OF THE NIGHT* (1921) Bela Lugosi, Lee Parry, Violette Napierska. A lost Lugosi film finally surfaces! Bela looks absolutely wonderful and has a meaty role in this silent espionage drama. He plays a French aristocrat that falls for a Russian club singer. Watch out though, she's secretly involved—in a big, big way—with an underground Russian revolutionary movement. She eventually entices Bela to aid her cause. Unfortunately, Bela's recently jilted girlfriend just happens to be a top Russian spy! Very interesting and surprisingly well-done. Known outside the U.S. as "Dance on the Volcano." Our thanks to Gary Rhodes for making this forgotten Lugosi classic available again. Music score. 16mm. ST44

AND THE WILD, WILD WOMEN* (1960) Anna Magnani, Giulietta Masina. One of the most famous women's prison exploitation films ever made, starring two of Italy's top stars. A harsh study about the grim realities of life in a non-coed, totally female prison environment. Story concerns a young girl who comes to prison and experiences the entire prison subculture. The inmates she befriends vary from big tough dangerous dames to smaller submissive ladies who are totally lost in prison life and stuck at the end of the prison pecking order. She eventually leaves prison while her fellow inmates remain, but comes back later to visit, showing that she is a true friend. One intriguing plot device is a particular cell bathroom where inmates go at certain times to see loved ones on the outside by holding up a mirror at a certain angle. Very exploitive, yet still a fascinating look at women's prison life. Three stars by Leonard Maltin. 16mm. X097

CURSE OF THE WRAYDONS* (1946) Tod Slaughter, Bruce Seton, Andrew Laurence. Tod's at it again as a mad spy who goes around the countryside strangling just about everybody he can get his hands on. Set in the early 1800s, his evil scheme is to destroy all the members of a family who once wronged him. He has a secret lab complete with a torture chamber that's highlighted in the film's frenzied climax. This is without a doubt the most over-the-top, leering, sneering, insidious laughing, totally looney-tunes performance Tod ever gave. A pure horror melodrama from start to finish. This film is a little long-winded at times (92 minutes), but it's definitely worth it for the numerous horror scenes of Tod doing his schtick. There are a couple of scenes where he goes absolutely bonkers. 35mm. H246



TRAPPED BY TELEVISION* (1936) Mary Astor, Lyle Talbot, Nat Pendleton, Joyce Compton. A real rarity! A young tele-vision inventor seeks financial backing for his research. He finds himself involved with a crooked businessman and a group of thugs who attempt to steal his invention! Science fiction for its time, this lively Columbia "B" film is quick, slick, and a lot of fun. 35mm. S207

ULYSSES AGAINST THE SON OF HERCULES* (1963) Georges Marchal, Michael Lane, Alessandra Panaro, Yvette Lebon. During an exciting sea battle, Hercules captures Ulysses. However, both are soon captured by weird creatures, half-man, half-bird. Our heroes try to escape, but eventually find themselves pitted against the creatures' master, a beautiful, yet evil queen. This is probably the rarest of the Sons of Hercules films. Color, 16mm. S597

WETBACKS* (1956) Lloyd Bridges, Nancy Gates, John Hoyt, Barton MacLane. The script is a little flakey, but a great cast helps out this exciting B thriller about a down-on-his-luck fisherman (Bridges) who takes out a tough guy (MacLane) and a dangerous dame (Gates) on a fishing charter, only to have them skip out without paying at the end of the cruise. Lloyd's then stuck in a small Mexican fishing village (along with Gates, who it turns out also got ditched) with no money and no gas to get home. He's then forced by Hoyt—at gunpoint—to run illegal aliens over the border. A cool drive-in movie. \$12.95 plus \$2.05 for packaging, handling, and postage. From 16mm. M279

MURDER

IN THE NIGHT



The rapid-fire story of an underworld mobster with a social bee in his bonnet and a rod on his hip!

Starring
JACK LARUE



WANTED IN LONDON
for American murders

Steve Marco, proprietor of London's Cotton Club who tried to disguise his past by climbing into English Society!

MURDER IN SOHO* (1939 aka MURDER IN THE NIGHT)

Jack LaRue, Sandra Storme, Bernard Lee, Google Withers. One of the slickest B murder mysteries we've seen in quite a while. LaRue (who looks like a cross between Bogart and Edward G. Robinson) is the gangster owner of a slick nightclub. In his office, he guns down one of his operatives in cold blood! His cohorts then dump the body outside to make it look like a street killing. His moll—who's wise to the killing—is jealous of a new singer Jack has his eye on. Will she spill the beans on him? Can Jack outwit the cops? This is one of those nifty B films where all the gals are gorgeous and all the guys are dressed in tuxedos. Lots of big band songs help compliment a real '30s nightclub party atmosphere. A cool, cool movie. \$12.95 plus \$2.05 for packaging, handling, and postage. From 16mm. M273

THE SUN SETS AT DAWN (1950) Walter Reed, Phillip

Shawn, Sally Parr. A true story about a young man railroaded to the death house. A smart reporter, sent to cover the execution, figures out who the real killer is, but can he get word to the warden in time? The state's brand new electric chair is revved up and ready to go. An amazing ending, considering it's all true. Not an action-packed film, but very engrossing with a literate, well-acted script. Winner of the Cosmopolitan Magazine movie citation. Recommended! \$12.95 plus \$2.05 for packaging, handling, and postage. From 16mm. M275

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THE LIVE WIRE* (1935) Dick Talmadge, Alberta Vaughn, George Walsh. Dick is a sailor who finds an ancient vase on an uncharted island. Later, he is employed by two archeologists to lead them back to the island. There they discover the skeleton-laden temples of a lost civilization. Things are further complicated by a mutinous crew. As usual for a Talmadge film, there are tons of fisticuffs! The temple shots were filmed on Universal's horror sets (looks a lot like Frankenstein's and Dracula's castles). \$12.95 plus \$2.05 for packaging, handling, and postage. From 16mm. AA06

A NIGHT OF MAGIC* (1944) Robert Griffith, Marian Olive, Billy Scott. Oh my god, IT'S ANOTHER MUMMY MOVIE! Well...sort of. A British playboy, who just happens to be in possession of a 3000-year old sarcophagus (it's sitting in his mansion living room), discovers there's a 3000-year old Egyptian princess inside-alive! She pops out one evening and the two of them go out on the town for an un-gettable night of romance and song. This is--to say the least--one of the most oddball musical fantasies we've ever seen. 16mm. F025

QUATERMASS CONCLUSION (1979) John Mills, Barbara Kellerman, Simon MacCorkindale. A British scientist is called out of retirement to help the military stop a death ray from outer space that's ravaging the Earth. The final chapter--so far--to the Quatermass series. Recommended. NOTE: This is the original HBO pre-record that's no longer available in stores. It's recorded at SP and runs 105min. We have a limited quantity, so order now. Color, 35mm. S212



THOROUGHbred (1935) Toby Wing, Wheeler Oakman, Kenne

Duncan. This is Toby's only starring role. She is the cutest girl who ever stepped in front of a camera (you might remember her from the "Young and Healthy" number in 42ND STREET). The plot has Kenne as an out-of-work reporter who wins an unknown horse in a dice game. Horse turns out to be very fast. Toby helps Kenne get into professional racing, but the two of them run up against race-fixers Oakman. Worth the price of the tape just to marvel at Toby's incredible bleached-blond cuteness. \$12.95 plus \$2.05 for packaging, handling, and postage. From a gorgeous 16mm print. AA07

THE CRIMSON CULT (1967 aka THE CURSE OF THE CRIMSON ALTAR) Boris Karloff, Christopher Lee, Barbara Steele, Mark Eden, Michael Gough. Lee is the wicked master of the sinister Graymarsh Lodge. Steele, as the green-skinned reincarnation of an ancient witch, is his supernatural cohort. Karloff is the occult expert who helps lead a fight against their evil conspiracy. Please be aware that this is the British edition of this AIP classic, featuring "R" rated footage and an alternate music score not featured in the original American theatrical and TV releases. NOTE: This is the original HBO pre-record that's no longer available in stores. It's recorded at SP. We have a limited quantity, so order now. Color, 35mm. H250



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ICY CLUTCH OF THE
SUPERNATURAL!

Alfred Leone presents
Telly Savalas
Elke Sommer

LISA AND THE DEVIL

LISA AND THE DEVIL* (1966) Telly Savallis, Elke Sommer, directed by Mario Bava. Upon this film's original release, scenes were added with Robert Alda as an exorcising priest. It was then released as HOUSE OF EXCORCISM. Many critics felt this new footage ruined what was one of Bava's very best films. Here now, is the original Bava cut prior to the additional scenes. It's a magnificent film about a beautiful young woman (Sommer) stranded with a devil-like character (Savalis) in a creepy, isolated mansion. There she discovers that she is the look-a-like for the evil owner's unfaithful, deceased mistress whose corpse still lies rotting in bed in a secret room. There is an overwhelming sense of morbid necrophilia present throughout the film as Bava's camera carresses long, lush draperies and putrid corpses, highlighted by atmospheric exterior night shots that reek with an atmospheric feeling of impending horror. If you love Italian horror you should see this classic. Color, from 16mm. H254

POISON IVY* (1953) Eddie Constantine, Howard Vernon. A rousing action movie that could be Eddie's best film next to ALPHAVILLE. As a tough federal agent, Eddie's up to his badge in everything from gold smugglers to shark-infested waters. Set in atmospheric Casablanca, this intrigue thriller has a distinct flavor not usually found in Eddie's other spy films. Recommended. 16mm. SP29

RADIO CAB MURDER* (1954) Jimmy Hanley, Lana Morris, Jack Allen. A remarkably well-done British thriller. A man is found murdered in an automobile! The police then enlist the aid of an ex-safecracker who infiltrates the gang responsible. An intricate bank robbery plan is on their agenda in this quality crime film that has much more action and far less talk than most British thrillers. In the end the villains die in a particularly grisly manner. Very suspenseful. \$12.95 plus \$2.05 for packaging, handling, and postage. From 16mm. M277



ASSIGNMENT TERROR (1969 aka DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN) Michael Rennie, Paul Naschy, Karin Dor. Rennie plays an alien mad scientist whose race is hellbent on conquering the Earth. His mission is to revive Earth's legendary monsters (they will assist him in the invasion). From a castle in Transylvania he carries out this insane scheme. His grisly lineup of creatures is incredible: Frankenstein, Dracula, the Werewolf (Naschy), and the Mummy. He also revives a couple of dead scientists to help him in the lab. Things start to unravel when the werewolf falls for one of his aides (Dor). Not a classic, but still good fun and worth having in your collection. From a stunningly beautiful color print. NOTE: Please don't confuse this film's alternate title with the Sam Sherman/Al Adamson drive-in classic of the same name with Lon Chaney and J. Carroll Naish. H210

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Here are 58 films for your holiday and post-holiday gift shopping. Some are quite rare. *Chloe* is an excellent choice for anyone with a taste for obscure horror. There are a lot of forgotten gems in our mystery and adventure sections this year. Titles like *Wetbacks*, *Radio Cab Murder*, *The Sun Sets at Dawn*, *Murder in Soho*, *Flying Blind*, *Thoroughbred*, and *The Live Wire* are all entertaining little B films with a lot going for them. There are many good titles in the other genres, as well. *Trapped by Television*, *Curse of the Wraydons*, *Lisa and the Devil*, *Ulysses Against the Son of Hercules*, *Poison Ivy*, *And the Wild, Wild Women*, and *Assignment Terror* are just a few examples. Enjoy!

PLEASE NOTE: *Planet of the Vampires*, *Die Monster Die*, *The Quatermass Conclusion*, *The Crimson Cult*, *Cry of the Banshee*, *Tomb of Ligeia*, *The Oblong Box*, and *The Conqueror Worm* are all original HBO pre-recorded tapes, and unlike the current Orion pre-recorded versions that are widely distributed in the EP mode, these are all recorded at SP. **IMPORTANT!!!** Three of these titles, *Die Monster Die*, *The Quatermass Conclusion*, and *The Crimson Cult* are no longer available in stores. Quantities are limited, so order now.



ASSIGNMENT TERROR (1969 aka *DRACULA VS. FRANKENSTEIN*) Michael Rennie, Paul Naschy, Karin Dor. Rennie is an alien mad scientist whose race is out to conquer Earth. From a castle in Transylvania he revives legendary monsters to him carry out this insane scheme. *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, the *Werewolf* (Naschy), and the *Mummy* are all on hand. Things start to unravel when the werewolf falls for one of his aides (Dor). From a stunning color print. **NOTE:** Please don't confuse this film's alternate title with the Sam Sherman/Al Adamson drive-in classic of the same name. **\$210**

EYES BEHIND THE STARS (1972) Martin Balsam, Natalie Delon. A photographer and his model are out in a creepy forest when they suddenly feel like they're being watched. They flee. Later, when the pictures are developed, aliens are seen! Color, 16mm. **\$211**

QUATERMASS CONCLUSION (1979) John Mills, Barbara Kellerman, Simon MacCorkindale. A British scientist is called out of retirement to help the military stop a death ray from outer space that's ravaging the Earth. The final chapter—so far—to the *Quatermass* series. Recommended. **NOTE:** This is the original HBO pre-record that's no longer available in stores. It's recorded at SP and runs 105min. We have a limited quantity, so order now. Color, 35mm. **\$212**

HORROR

CHLOE* (1934) Olive Borden, Reed Howes, Molly O'Day. A gnarled, old black voodoo mistress from the Everglades comes out of the swamp to seek revenge on a white plantation lord. Later, evidence surfaces that her daughter, Chloe, may actually be the plantation lord's long lost daughter. A frenzied, realistic sacrificial voodoo ceremony highlights the climax of this wonderful film that weaves its way through an atmosphere of swamp shacks, alligators, voodoo dolls, snakes, bats, and cypress trees. A charming score underlies the film and adds a flavor that's similar to *WHITE ZOMBIE*. 16mm. **H245**

CURSE OF THE WRAYDONS* (1946) Tod Slaughter, Bruce Seton, Andrew Laurence. Tod's a mad spy who goes around the countryside strangling just about everybody he can get his hands on. He has a secret lab complete with torture chamber. This is the most over-the-top, leering, sneering, insidious laughing, totally loony tunes performance Tod ever gave. A delightful horror melodrama with numerous scenes of Tod going absolutely bonkers. 35mm. **H246**

DIE, MONSTER, DIE (1965) Boris Karloff, Nick Adams, Suzan Farmer, Freda Jackson. An AIP classic! Karloff plays the lord of a strange manor around which all life—plant and animal—seem to be mutating into hideous monstrosities. Adams is the meddling American who has come to rescue Boris' daughter. He discovers a large, radioactive meteorite in the cellar. Color, from 35mm. **H247**

TOMB OF LIGEIA (1965) Vincent Price, Elizabeth Sheppard, Derek Francis. The last AIP Corman Poe film is beautiful to look at, with more outdoor shots than previous Poe films. Price plays the strange dressed-in-black-nobleman obsessed with his dead wife. Has his new wife been possessed her sinister spirit? Color, 35mm. **H248**

NOW, FOR THE FIRST TIME...

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RETURN OF THE GIANT MAJIN (1966) Kojiro Hongo, Shihō Fujimura. It's rumble time again for an ancient Japanese god whose spirit inhabits a giant stone statue. He romps around the countryside stomping the bad guys in a medieval feud. Good overall production values with some great action sequences are featured in this well done sequel to *MAJIN, MONSTER OF TERROR*. Color, 16mm. **H249**

THE CRIMSON CULT (1967 aka *CURSE OF THE CRIMSON ALTAR*) Boris Karloff, Christopher Lee, Barbara Steele, Mark Eden, Michael Gough. Lee and Steele are wicked masters of witchcraft. Karloff is the occult expert who thwarts their evil plans. This British edition features "R" rated footage and alternate music not featured in the original American theatrical & TV releases. Color, 35mm. **H250**

THE CONQUEROR WORM (1968) Vincent Price, Ian Ogilvy, Hillary Dwyer, Patrick Wymark. One of Price's best films has him as the corrupt "Witchfinder General" who tortures and blackmails his victims for money, power, and sex. A classic. **NOTE:** This later British edition features "R" rated footage and alternate music not featured in the original American theatrical release. Color, 35mm. **H251**

THE OBLONG BOX (1969) Vincent Price, Christopher Lee, Hillary Dwyer. Price has his monstrous deformed brother buried alive. Things get sticky though, when the brother is brought back from the grave and allowed to go on killing spree. Color, from 35mm. **H252**

CRY OF THE BANSHEE (1970) Vincent Price, Essy Persson, Patrick Mower, Elisabeth Bergner. A vengeance-seeking Druid cult leader is out to get Price and his family. She sends a demon werewolf in the form of a handsome young man to finish off Vinnie and the kids. A colorful 16th century witch story. Color, from 35mm. **H253**

LISA AND THE DEVIL* (1972) Telly Savalas, Elke Sommer, directed by Mario Bava. A magnificent film about a beautiful young woman stranded with a devil-like character in a creepy, isolated mansion. There she discovers she is the look-a-like for the evil owner's unfaithful mistress whose rotting corpse still lies in a secret room. This fantastic film is laced with an overwhelming sense of morbid necrophilia and a constant feeling of impending horror. **NO!** this version does not have that awful Robert Alda footage that was added into the American release version, *HOUSE OF EXORCISM*. Rated "R." 95 minutes. Letterboxed, from a color 35mm print. **H254**



SWORD AND SANDAL

THOR AND THE AMAZON WOMEN (1960) Joe Robinson, Suzy Anderson, Harry Baird, Maria Fiore. Our mighty hero battles the Njala civilization of Amazonian women. This is perhaps the best "bad" sword and sandal film ever made—really ludicrous in a nearly hysterical manner. Lots of silly dialogue and amateurish sound effects are complimented by an endless series of clumsily staged gladiatorial combats between buxom Amazon babes. A riot. Color, 16mm. **\$S95**

FURY OF ACHILLES (1962) Gordon Mitchell, Jacques Bergerac. The epic story of Troy. Achilles, who initially resists the idea of leading an attack on the fortified city, eventually leads the Greeks to victory over the embattled Trojans. Color, 16mm. **\$S96**

ULYSSES AGAINST THE SON OF HERCULES* (1963) Georges Marchal, Michael Lane, Alessandra Panaro, Yvette Lebon. During an exciting sea battle, Hercules captures Ulysses. However, both are soon captured by weird creatures, half-man, half-bird. Our heroes try to escape, but eventually find themselves pitted against the creatures' master, a beautiful, yet evil queen. Color, 16mm. **\$S97**

GOLIATH AT THE CONQUEST OF DAMASCUS* (1964) Rock Stevens, Helga Line. The legendary strong man, Goliath, goes through a series of harrowing adventures as he helps an exiled king regain his throne. Lots of fierce battle scenes. Color, 16mm. **\$S98**



SCIENCE FICTION

TRAPPED BY TELEVISION* (1936) Mary Astor, Lyle Talbot, Nat Pendleton, Joyce Compton, Thurston Hall. A real rarity! A young television inventor seeks financial backing for his research. He finds himself involved with a crooked businessman and a group of thugs who attempt to steal his invention! Science fiction for its time, this lively Columbia "B" film is quick, slick, and a lot of fun. 35mm. **\$207**

DICK TRACY (1937) Ralph Byrd, Kay Hughes, Smiley Burnette. A very well-edited condensation of one of the greatest sci-fi/crime serials ever made. It's Dick against his own brother, Gordon, who's under the hypnotic control of a master criminal known as the Spider! Don't like wading through entire serials? This one's for you. **BUY IT!** They don't make 'em much better than this. A nice 16mm print. **\$208**

ATTACK OF THE CRAB MONSTERS (1957) Richard Garland, Pamela Duncan, Russell Johnson. One of the greatest "B" sci-fi movies ever made. A research team gets stranded on a small island recently exposed to fall-out from an H-bomb test. All animal life has been destroyed except for seagulls and crabs. Unfortunately, the crabs have mutated into giant monsters and are literally dissecting the island in search of their human prey. Great fun! From 35mm. **\$202**

FROZEN ALIVE (1964) Mark Stevens, Marianne Koch. An interesting and unusual sci-fi thriller. Stevens plays a scientist experimenting with suspended animation. After experimenting with animals, he decides to be his own Guinea pig. While he's on ice, his wife is murdered! When he's being thawed, it's established that he's the prime suspect. Who is guilty? Some cool lab scenes. 16mm. **\$111**

LAST MAN ON EARTH* (1964) Vincent Price, Franca Bettoia, Emma Daniell. Top notch science fiction. A plague has killed off most of the earth's population and Price is the sole survivor. The other inhabitants are mutant vampires that Price stakes by day and battles each night. Compelling and chilling sci-fi. From 35mm. **\$144**

PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES (1965) Barry Sullivan, Norma Bengell, directed by Mario Bava. Weird things start to happen when a spaceship makes a forced landing on a strange, misty planet. The crew members start going berserk. They eventually find themselves being taken over by disembodied alien vampires. A beautiful film to look at, one of Bava's best, a '60s sci-fi classic. Color, 35mm. **\$209**

CHALLENGE OF THE GLADIATOR (1964) Rock Stevens, Gloria Milland. Harsh cruelty sweeps over the madman Nero's corrupt Roman empire. The rebel slave Spartacus leads a revolt against the empire in this colorful spectacle. Color, from 16mm. \$599

EXPLOITATION

SECRETS OF A MODEL (1940) Sharon Lee, Harold Daniels, Julian Madison. This exploitation classic shows what can happen to young girls when they run out of cash. A pretty young girl needs cash for her dying mom and ends up as a "model" for a sculpture called, "The Spirit of Youth." Later she gets smashed and let's a no-good-playboy-type have his way with her. What's a girl to do? 35mm. X095

LOVE LIFE OF ADOLPH HITLER (1948 aka CONFORM OR DIE) A poorly edited, yet intriguing documentary about Hitler and Mussolini. There are some interesting home movies of Eva Braun and her scantily-clad girlfriends swimming, too. More vivid is the gut-wrenching footage of Nazi atrocities (NO! we don't recommend this for the kids). Mussolini and other war criminals are also shown in death. Nightmarish to say the least. Dwaïn Esper supposedly had a hand in it. Re-released in later years with footage of Mao added. 35mm. X096

AND THE WILD, WILD WOMEN (1960) Anna Magnani, Giulietta Masina. A harsh study about the grim realities of life in a non-coed, totally female prison environment. Story concerns a young girl who comes to prison and experiences the entire prison subculture. The inmates she befriends vary from big tough dangerous dames to smaller submissive ladies who are totally lost in prison life. Very exploitive, yet still a fascinating look at women's prison life. This is a damn good movie. Three stars by Leonard Maltin. From 16mm. X097

GIRL IN TROUBLE (1963) Tammy Clark, Ray Menard, Martin Smith. A cheap, sleazy, crummy exploitation film shot in and around New Orleans. A young farmer's daughter leaves the bliss of small-town life for the rat race of the big city. She goes from model to stripper, finding herself abused by lecherous men at every turn. Some great period shots of early '60s country and city life. This would probably be rated "R" for some occasional topless shots. 35mm. X098



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ACTION-ADVENTURE

PLEASE NOTE: All titles in this section are just \$12.95, plus \$2.05 per title for packaging, handling, and postage.

THE LIVE WIRE (1935) Dick Talmadge, Alberta Vaughn, Martin Turner. Dick finds an ancient vase on an uncharted island. Later, he leads two archeologists back to the island. There they discover the skeleton-laden temples of a lost civilization. Tons of fisticuffs! The temple shots were filmed on Universal's horror sets. 16mm. AA06

THOROUGHbred (1935) Toby Wing, Kenne Duncan, Wheeler Oakman. Kenne is an out-of-work reporter who wins an unknown horse in a dice game. Horse turns out to be very fast. Toby helps Kenne into racing, but the two of them run up against race-fixers Oakman. Toby's the cutest thing on two legs. Top 16mm print. AA07

THE LION MAN (1936) John Hall, Kathleen Burke, Richard Adams. A British businessman is murdered by an evil sheik, but his young son—who survived the massacre—is raised in the desert and eventually grows up to become known as "El Lion." He eventually has a confrontation with the man who killed his father. From 16mm. AA08

DUKE OF THE NAVY (1942) Ralph Byrd, Veda Ann Borg, Stubby Krugger. Two fun-loving sailors go out on leave. Before they know it, they get mixed up with gangsters and buried treasure. Where's Dick Tracy when you need him. Another PRC epic. From 16mm. AA09

JACK OF DIAMONDS (1949) Nigel Patrick, Joan Carol, Cyril Raymond. A young couple charters a yacht. They set out to find a sunken treasure but meet up with some unexpected happenings. This is an interesting and rare British adventure pic. From 16mm. AA10

TREASURE OF THE AZTECS (1965) Lex Barker, Gerard Barry, Rik Battaglia. A doctor obtains financial aid from a wealthy Count who ends up murdered? A disinherited son comes forward and accuses the doctor of the murder. Things end up in the wilds of Mexico where the hunt is on for a secret treasure. Color, 16mm. AA11



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MARCEL CERDAN • FERRUCCIO TAGLIAVINI
MYSTERY-SUSPENSE-FILM NOIR

PLEASE NOTE: All titles in this section are just \$12.95, plus \$2.05 per title for packaging, handling, and postage.

VALLEY OF WANTED MEN (1935) Frankie Darro, Roy Mason, Russell Hopton, Grant Withers, Drue Layton. Interesting early indie about three convicts who escape from prison. They return to Pleasant Valley in the hopes of finding the criminal who framed one of them on a bank robbery charge. Frankie and his sister help out. 16mm. M270

SHADOWS OVER SHANGHAI (1937) James Dunn, Ralph Morgan, Robert Barrat, Linda Gray. A flyer who's carrying a valuable golden amulet, is shot down over China by a ruthless Russian agent who also wants the amulet (it's worth \$5 million). The amulet winds up with the flyer's sister, who flees from the Russian into Shanghai where she meets up with a wisecracking American reporter. 16mm. M271

VENGEANCE (1937) Lyle Talbot, Wendy Barrie Marc Lawrence, Eddie Acuff, Lucille Lund. Lyle's a cop who hesitates in using his gun during a payroll robbery. This allows the robbers to escape. Lyle then quits the force in disgrace and turns to a life of crime. Good B crime drama originally distributed by Columbia Pictures. From 16mm. M272

MURDER IN SOHO (1938 aka MURDER IN THE NIGHT) Jack La Rue, Sandra Storm, Bernard Lee, Googie Withers. A murder is committed in a slick nightclub and the body dumped into the street. An Inspector has a notion of where the murder really took place and sets out to track the killer down. A slick, well-made crime film with lots of atmosphere. LaRue's priceless. Recommended. 16mm. M273

FLYING BLIND (1942) Richard Arlen, Jean Parker, Nils Astor, Roger Pryor, Eddie Quillen, Dick Purcell, Dwight Frye, Grady Sutton. Big cast helps this colorful B film about a notorious doctor who steals a secret military device, then hijacks Arlen's airliner. They end up crashing in the wild and are threatened by a raging forest fire. Can they repair the plane in time? Frye has a small role as a traitorous plane engineer (wow! what a death scene). From 16mm. M274

THE SUN SETS AT DAWN (1950) Walter Reed, Phillip Shawn, Sally Parr. A true story about a young man railroaded to the death house. A smart reporter, sent to cover the execution, figures out who the real killer is, but can he get word to the warden in time? The electric chair is revved up and ready to go. A literate, well-acted script. Winner of the Cosmopolitan Magazine movie citation. 16mm. M275

MAN OF CONFLICT (1953) John Agar, Edward Arnold, Susan Morrow. Good drama about rich kid Agar coming home to be groomed to take over the family company, only to find out that power has corrupted his father (Arnold). To make matters worse, John falls for the daughter of one of the impoverished workers. 16mm. M276

RADIO CAB MURDER (1954) Jimmy Hanley, Lana Morris, Jack Allen. A remarkably well-done British thriller. A man is found murdered in a car! The police then enlist the aid of an ex-con who infiltrates the gang responsible. An intricate bank robbery scheme is on their agenda in this quality crime film. Very suspenseful. 16mm. M277

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MURDER ON APPROVAL (1955) Tom Conway, Delphi Lawrence, Brian Worth. A special investigator is on the trail of a priceless stamp that was recently stolen. His main suspect is the nephew of a beautiful lady. A British super mystery. Not bad. 16mm. M278

WETBACKS (1956) Lloyd Bridges, Nancy Gates, John Hoyt, Barton MacLane. The script is a little flaky, but a great cast helps out this exciting B thriller about a down-on-his-luck fisherman who's stuck in a small Mexican fishing village. He's then forced—at gunpoint—to run illegal aliens over the border. A cool drive-in movie. 16mm. M279

PASSION OF SLOW FIRE (1963) Jean DeSailly, Alexandra Stewart, Yves Robert. An instructor goes to bed one night only to find the next day that a young girl was murdered in the room next to his. He's immediately the prime suspect (even his wife thinks he did it). Another murder soon follows. Gripping and well-acted. 16mm. M280

SPYS, ESPIONAGE, INTRIGUE

NAVY SECRETS (1938) Fay Wray, Grant Withers, Craig Reynolds. Grant's a Navy guy who's given the task of busting up a spy ring within the service. Fay's just along for the ride, or is she? A nice little Monogram action flick. From a good-looking 16mm print. SP28

POISON IVY (1953) Eddie Constantine, Howard Vernon. A rousing action movie that could be Eddie's best film next to ALPHAVILLE. As a tough federal agent, Eddie's up to his badge in everything from gold smugglers to shark-infested waters. Set in atmospheric Casablanca, this intrigue thriller has a distinct flavor not usually found in Eddie's other spy films. From 16mm. SP29

OPERATION HURRICANE: FRIDAY NOON (1966) George Nader, Neine Weiss, Richard Munch. Nader made a number of espionage and intrigue films. Here he plays agent Jerry Cotton who's assigned the task of busting up a gang responsible for many murders and armed robberies throughout the country. From 16mm. SP30

THE FULLER REPORT (1966) Ken Clark, Beba Loncar, Jess Hahn. Ken (you might remember him from ATTACK OF THE GIANT LEECHES) plays an undercover agent. His dangerous assignment is to stop an assassination that could start WW3! Color, 16mm. SP31

SPY TODAY, DIE TOMORROW (1967) Lex Barker, Maria Perschy, Brad Harris, Eddie Aron, Wolfgang Preiss. Big name cast heads up this likable spy thriller. CIA headquarters receives an unbelievable message: A nuclear bomb is missing from the U.S. weapons arsenal! Our agents are called in to find out what the heck is happening. Good cloak and dagger action. Color, from 16mm. SP32



FANTASY

A NIGHT OF MAGIC (1944) Robert Griffith, Marian Olive, Billy Scott. A British playboy, who just happens to be in possession of an ancient sarcophagus (it's sitting in his mansion living room), discovers there's a 3000-year old Egyptian princess inside—alive! She pops out one evening and the two of them go out on the town for an unforgettable night of romance and song. This is—to say the least—one of the most oddball musical fantasies we've ever seen. 16mm. F025

FAME AND THE DEVIL (1950) Misha Auer, Marilyn Buford, Marcel Cerdan. How many men have gone to the devil (literally) over a woman. This off-beat fantasy is about three men, a diplomat, a singer, and a boxer who consider selling their soul to Satan over a beautiful dame. Cerdan—who plays the boxer—was the real-life middle weight champ and died shortly after in a plane crash. 16mm. F026

HANS BRINKER (1965) Reed Maxwell, Crista Standish, William Victor. This is a beautifully done reworking of the age-old story of Hans Brinker and the silver skates. Well-scripted, well-acted—overall this is just a beautiful family film. Not really a fantasy per se, but close enough in mood and flavor. From a beautiful color 16mm print. F027

THE MAGIC SERPENT (1966) Hiroki Matsukata, Tomoko Ogawa. Watch out for that dragon! Years after the murder of his father, a young Japanese warrior challenges the murderer to a duel. They both transform themselves into giant monsters and go toe to toe. In the end our hero flies away on a giant eagle. Color, 16mm. F028

SILENT THRILLS

THE DEERSLAYER (1920) Bela Lugosi, Emil Mamelok, Herta Heden. This early silent version of the J. F. Cooper classic is a little stogy, but still very interesting to watch. Lugosi plays the courageous indian warrior, Chingachgook. This is the closest Bela will ever come to making into our Sinister Six-gun section. From 16mm. ST43

DAUGHTER OF THE NIGHT (1921) Bela Lugosi, Lee Parry, Violette Napierska. A lost Lugosi film finally surfaces! Bela looks absolutely wonderful and has a meaty role in this silent espionage drama. He plays a French aristocrat that falls for a Russian cabaret singer. Watch out, though, she's secretly involved with a Russian revolutionary movement. She entices Bela to aid her cause. Unfortunately, Bela's recently jilted girlfriend just happens to be a top Russian spy! Very interesting and surprisingly well-done. Known in Europe as "Dance on the Volcano." Music score. From 16mm. ST44

THE MIDNIGHT GIRL (1925) Bela Lugosi, Lila Lee, Gareth Hughes. Bela plays a corrupt patron of the arts in this old melodrama from the mid-20s. He and his sleazebag find themselves at odds over the same singer. Will they resolve their differences? 16mm. ST45

DON Q. SON OF ZORRO (1966) Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Astor, Warner Oland, Donald Crisp. Fairbanks has four roles in this 4-star silent classic, including the title role and his legendary father. Doug was at the height of his career and he looks it. 16mm. ST46

SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 9

years). And it is perplexing, to say the least, to find *Scarlet Street* helping to perpetuate—however inadvertently—an ugly stereotype against which gays have fought for many years.

Alan Brennert
Sherman Oaks, CA

It certainly was not our intention to paint Bruce Wayne as a pointy-eared Humbert Humbert lusting after Dick Grayson's Lolita. It has been our understanding that the Boy Wonder began comic-book life as a 12-year-old, then gradually aged four years, remaining 16 until a sudden leap in the early '60s, when he quickly reached college age. It's true that he's youngish in our reproduction of that New Republic cover, but he's certainly of legal age in the article's second illustration, and well past the age of consent in the recent Batfilms. Mr. Brennert makes a good point, but we also agree with Mr. Sullivan's contention that an unambiguously gay Dynamic Duo is "not necessarily a bad thing." Let's not throw out the bathwater with the baby.

✉

In the still from *THE CAINE MUTINY* on page 36 of Issue #25,

the seated individual in the top row is Claude Akins, not John Duncan. Duncan is actually not among those in the photo.

Here is the complete identification of the CAINE lineups:

Top row (left to right): Claude Akins, Don Dubbins, Todd Karns, Lee Marvin, James Edwards.

Bottom row (left to right): James Best, Robert Francis, Herbert Anderson, Van Johnson, Humphrey Bogart, Tom Tully, Fred MacMurray, Arthur Franz, Joe Haworth, Jerry Paris.

Terry Witmer
Milesburg, PA
Oops! And thank you!

✉

While getting over food poisoning (or maybe it was the flu), there I was, stuck in bed bored and not for the first time . . . anyway, I pulled out all my old issues of *Scarlet Street* and was pleased to realize that I had skipped over some articles when I initially purchased. Of course, I had lots of new reading at my sickly fingertips and it helped me get through the worst of my malady.

I enjoyed the latest issue (SS #24) with its coverage of Fu Manchu. I will admit, I was not a big Fu fan,

but now I relish the rental of the Boris Karloff video. I also enjoyed the letter section with the pro-gay letters and also the comments of the not-so-friendly letters accusing SS of a gay agenda, although I am quite sick of the poison diatribe spouted by Mr. J.J. Janis; personally, I think he's wound a little too tight and I find his vile bile somewhat scary. I would personally stay away from that boy, but I also find it pleasing that your responses pull the rug out from under his oh-so-righteous attitude. He ends up looking (or rather sounding) quite foolish and uninformed.

I love the interviews and all the B horror coverage. I'm not a fan of Sherlock Holmes, but as you suggest so eloquently, I merely skip over those articles and I'm not in the least bit offended when they're included. Things I would like to see covered in future *Scarlet Streets*: how about the Bill Castle films *HOMICIDAL* and the lesser known *13 FRIGHTENED GIRLS*? (My friends and I refer to it as *13 SCREAMING GIRLFRIENDS* and we feel it should be remade as a

Continued on page 15

The families of Horror Greats, Chaney Sr. and Jr., Lugosi and Karloff again want to thank the thousands of people who supported our efforts to have these men honored on U.S. Postage Stamps. This will become a reality on September 30 as five beautiful stamps will be issued on that day.

Karloff Enterprises is delighted to announce that it will be able to offer non-philatelic products which depict the stamps. We will carry the merchandise of many of our new licensees, such as T-shirts, magnets, lapel pins, caps, and string lights.

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THE PLAYGIRLS AND THE VAMPIRE
1960, b&w, Italy, Directed by Piero Regnoli, with Walter Brandi, Lyla Rocco, Maria Giovannini

One of the last great ones from the Golden Age of Italian Horror to reach home video and - yes! yes! yes! - it's nudity and eroticism are completely uncut!

Five sexy dancers take refuge in the castle of Count Kernassy. Told to stay in their rooms at night, the lovely Katia roams around looking for a shower and is found dead and bitten in the morning. Next evening Katia appears in the room of their manager Lucas, stark naked except for her newly acquired fangs. Worse, the Count's long dead look-a-like ancestor is a white faced vampire who thinks another of the girls is his long lost love. After staking Katia, the vampire then fights the Count until sunlight, a spear, and some wonderfully cheesy cartoon animation does the bloodsucker in ...

In other words, a beautiful blend of old-fashioned booga-booga complete with a steamin' striptease and a surprisingly bare-breasted vampire babe.

An immaculate transfer from the original 35mm negative courtesy of Richard Gordon #6201
-Frank Henenlotter

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Crimson Chronicles

by Forrest J Ackerman



Can you imagine a country on Earth with a population of one billion two hundred thousand people whose sci-fi fans never so much as heard of DRACULA? FRANKENSTEIN? Boris Karloff? Bela Lugosi? Ray Bradbury—but crowded 'round me for my autograph?! In Beijing, China (pop. 12 million; bicycles, 8 million), and Cheng-du (pop. 10 million), there wasn't a moment of my 10 days there that standing, sitting, walking, eating, talking, I wasn't surrounded by hordes of outstretched hands! "Sign name, please! Want to be your friend!" I had never heard of Cheng-du (at first I thought it was Chinese for Chandu the Magician) until I got to said metropolis, but before I left there and Beijing, I think that out of the total of 22 million people, perhaps 10 or 12 didn't get my autograph! I must admit, though, that, because I was in

the company of five space pioneers—two American astronauts (Shannon Lucid and Jerry Lynn Ross) and three Russian Cosmonauts—it's possible I was mistaken for a spaceman, as one time, after signing my name for two hours for hundreds of children, one of them asked me: "How many times have you been in space?" Of course, I was born spaced-out, but didn't know how to translate that into Chinese.

I ventured into the, er, Forry-bidden City.

In honor of Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit, climbed 451 steps of the Great Wall of China (5,000 miles long, 10 years in construction by one million workers—at the time, one-fifth of the population of China, many of whom died building the incredible edifice).

In addition to the spacial celebrities, I was in the company of sci-fi author James Gunn (he interviewed me about 25 years ago for a

classroom film on scientifilms), Elizabeth Hull (wife of sf great Fred Pohl, recovering from an operation), Charles Brown (editor/publisher of award-winning sci-fi newspaper *Locus*), sf author David Hill, and professionals from Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Australia.

The occasion was the 1997 Beijing International Science Fiction Conference, sponsored by Mrs. Yang Xiao, who accomplished the incredible feat of starting out with 600 sales for China's first sci-fi magazine, *Science Fiction World*, and building it up to a current sales figure of 250,000 monthly! She had visited me in the Ackermansion and published a feature on me, which was why I was known and not scores of American sf celebrities. Hugo Gernsback's pioneering classic "Ralph 124C41+" had been published in China, via my agency, and a few works by Isaac Asimov, Jack Williamson, and James Gunn, but by and large the majority of American sf writers are yet to be discovered in China.

Those familiar with Japan's monster movie MOTHRA will

Continued on page 79

SCARLET LETTERS

Continued from page 14

campy drag movie with a haunted house theme.) Also a personal request: ROBINSON CRUSOE ON MARS. I recently purchased the laserdisc and I could have sworn you covered it some time ago in your SCREEN AND SCREEN AGAIN section, but I searched all my back issues and couldn't locate it for a gander. Am I mad?

Will the Classic Horror Stamps featuring the Universal Monsters be available to Chicagoans like myself through our local post office? If not, will *Scarlet Street* be making them available through its fine publication?

In closing, please find my order for the SS Slightly Mangled issues, and just what is a string of polonies? Take care; I love all of you. To Fu Manchu, Thanks for Everything . . .

Hugo Hernandez
Chicago, IL

We have yet to cover ROBINSON CRUSOE ON MARS, but sooner or

later we'll be getting around to it. The Classic Horror Stamps should be available at all U.S. post offices by the time this reaches your now-healthy (we hope) fingers.

☒

As a free-lance illustrator whose income goes from feast to famine, I know as well as anyone that it can be damn near impossible financially to acquire all the reference material which currently exists, not to mention all the videos, books, and CDs which support the reference.

Still, without some sort of qualifying statement, I think it ill behooves a writer to make a judgement call on material with which he is unfamiliar.

In the otherwise excellently written collection of laser reviews in *Scarlet Street* #23, Michael Brunas does exactly that in his review of THE OLD DARK HOUSE when he suggests that James Whale's movie adaptation is a sendup of J.B. Priestley's novel, *Benighted*. In fact, the novel itself is a very dry

parody (as only the English can seem to produce) of old dark house thrillers, and the film is a fairly accurate transcription of both the book's plot and, more importantly, its tone.

The character descriptions in the book are replicated in Karloff's makeup and the casting of Eva Moore, Ernest Thesiger, Melvyn Douglas, and Charles Laughton. Femm's love of gin (considered a particularly decadent, possibly effeminate drink at the time) is directly from the book (and apparently so tickled Whale that he grafted the "vice" onto Thesiger's character in BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN a few years later); even the bit of dialogue quoted at the top of the review is verbatim from the novel, as is most of the movie's dialogue.

When AMC ran the movie some months ago, it was my first chance to view a film I'd only read of previously. It prompted me to reread the novel, which is definitely of a piece with Priestley's other work.

Let's Scare 'Em!

Grand Interviews and a Filmography of Horrific Proportions, 1930-1961

Rick Atkins

Foreword by Rose Hobart; Afterword by Curt Siodmak

264pp. \$45 illustrated casebound (7 x 10) 122 photos, filmography, bibliography, index ISBN 0-7864-0373-X

This work documents and illustrates three decades of horror, fantasy and monster movies with interviews, over 120 photographs and a filmography of more than 250 of the best known (and some not so known) releases, beginning with *The Cat Creeps* (1930) through *The Innocents* (1961). Leading producers, directors, and actors (e.g., Carl Laemmle, Jr., Kenneth Strickfaden, William Castle, John Carradine, and Forrest J Ackerman) discuss the genre, their colleagues, directing styles, business deals and moviemaking secrets. The extensive filmography covers 251 films.

Censored Screams

The British Ban on Hollywood Horror in the Thirties

Tom Johnson

Foreword by Tom Weaver; Introduction by Richard Gordon; Afterword by Greg Mank

224pp. \$38.50 library binding 69 photographs, illustrations, filmography, bibliography, index ISBN 0-7864-0394-2

As *Dracula* (1931) and *Frankenstein* (1931) ushered in the golden age of horror films in the United States, studios and distributors were faced with a major problem in their number one overseas market: the British Board of Film Censors (BBFC) were demanding extensive cuts, enforcing age restrictions, and banning outright many of Hollywood's horror movies. This work examines how and why horror films were censored or banned in the United Kingdom, and the part these actions played in ending Hollywood's golden age of horror.



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Priestley uses the comfortable device of the thriller to explore social issues of the day and satirize various kinds of people and behavior. In addition to exploring the "lost men" of World War One (in the character of Penderel) and the underlying rottenness of "pillars of the community" such as Sir William (a favorite Priestley theme, by the way), there are frequent political and philosophical discussions by the characters.

Whale and scenarist Benn W. Levy may have tweaked Priestley a bit, but even on the page the characters of Morgan and Horace and Rebecca Femm are just a bit too over-the-top to take seriously. Actually, it is Priestley's novel that walks the tightrope between seriousness and sendup, whereas Whale and Levy tip the scales more definitely toward comedy. (The business with the black-eyed potatoes is one of their embellishments, but my favorite is the business of Thesiger unceremoniously dumping a bouquet into the fireplace.) Still, they capture the spirit of Priestley far better than RKO's adaptation of *Dangerous Corner* two years later.

Perhaps it is a sign of our video age that, while we all seem to have a full library of the films we're interested in, we pass by the novels on which they are based. In my younger days, the films only showed up occasionally on the tube, so I searched out the books to "relive" the films. Thus I have a passing acquaintance with all the obvious classics, as well as *Benighted*, *The Edge of Running Water*, and all the Fu Manchu novels.

Actually, this brings up some overdue praise for several issues back, in which the novelization was contrasted with the film of *A STUDY IN TERROR* in one article, while another article continued a comparison of the Philo Vance books and films. (Back in SS #19) Future articles in this vein should be encouraged in *Scarlet Street*, especially as most other genre publications seem to focus solely on the films and their production histories.

Harry H. Long
Lebanon, PA

You mentioned in a recent issue that some day you might do a theme issue again. If you do, I'd

like to suggest as a subject films from Boileau and Narcejac. These would include *DIABOLIQUE* in all its versions, *VERTIGO*, *BODY PARTS*, *FACES IN THE DARK*, *LES YEUX SANS VISAGE* (not based on one of their books, but they did the adaptation), and numerous other French thrillers, such as *MALEFICES* and *LES LOUVES*. *VERTIGO*, *DIABOLIQUE*, and *LES YEUX SANS VISAGE* would make a great triple bill for you, don't you think?

Galen Peoples
Sherman Oaks, CA

That's a terrific suggestion, Galen, and we'll keep it in mind.

I had never even heard of *Scarlet Street: The Magazine of Mystery and Horror* before today, when I came across some copies at two local books and magazines stores. What a pleasant surprise!

Scarlet Street ranks right up there with *Famous Monsters*, *Cinemagic*, *Starlog*, and *News of the Weird* (which went on to become *The Joe Bob Briggs Report*). I thought the articles about stop-motion pioneer Ray Harryhausen and Christopher Atkins (SS #23) were very inter-

esting. By the way, there was a sequel to THE BLUE LAGOON made a few years ago called RETURN TO THE BLUE LAGOON, which starred Atkins look-alike Brian Krause (who wore a loincloth the size of a bath towel) and Mila Jovovich. It was rated PG-13 and made the original look like soft-core pornography!

I'm thinking about getting a subscription to *Scarlet Street*. Keep up the good work.

Wes Pierce
Orlando, FL

Thinking? Thinking? The time for thinking is long past, Wes! Get that Scarlet Street subscription and get it now! (As you can see, we've been practicing our "soft sales" method. It's so much easier than carting that whip around.)

I write to tell you how much I enjoyed Issue #23 with its coverage of jungle films. The interview with Irish McCalla was very interesting and entertaining, but in your coverage of JUNGLE GEMS you omitted a whole subgenre: the jungle girl movie.

Most people might think that the jungle girl film started with TRA-

DER HORN, featuring Edwina Booth as the daughter of a missionary raised by a savage tribe in Africa. Actually, the first film of the genre was the appropriately titled serial THE JUNGLE GODDESS, made in 1922 and starring Elinor Field. Footage from this was later used to make a sound serial called QUEEN OF THE JUNGLE.

Hollywood was not the only source of jungle girl films. In the 1950s, Germany Arca Studios held an open casting call for an actress to star in a jungle girl film. Out of almost 12,000 young ladies, a 17-year-old named Marion Michael was chosen. The film, LIANE, JUNGLE GODDESS, was so successful that it sparked a whole series. The third film replaced Marion Michael with Catherina Von Schell—or, as she is now called, Catherine Schell.

With the success of the LIANE films, other countries began making jungle girl films. From England, we got EVE with Celeste Yarnall. Italy gave us LUANA, starring Mei Chen, and TARZANA, THE WILD GIRL. Even Hong Kong put out a jungle girl film starring Evelyn Kraft.

Perhaps you could run an article in an upcoming *Scarlet Street* and tell people what they're missing.

James Killian
Sumiton, AL

OUR JUNGLE GEMS feature concentrated on American films. We may have missed the titles you mentioned, but we did cover more than just Sheena, including the Nyoka serials and the south sea adventures of the luscious Dorothy Lamour.

**Hey, there . . .
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Scarlet Letters**

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Gosh, fellas, there's only one thing worries me—when I get Lou's brain, will I still be smart enough to read *Scarlet Street*?

Yes, kids, it's the *Scarlet Street* Slightly Mangled Special. We have in our vaults some issues with minor defects: price tags glued on the covers, a folded page, a gypsy curse scrawled on the classifieds . . . nothing too grim, but enough to render them unsuitable for sale at the usual rate.

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the NEWS HOUND

The Hound likes to celebrate Halloween the nostalgic, old-fashioned way: ancient blood sacrifice. But since it's frowned upon these days, he'll settle for offering up some sanguinary bulletins to you Scarlet Streeters . . .

Raiders of the Lost Sequels

Rumors have been mongering for more than three years about a new RAIDERS movie, possibly titled INDIANA JONES AND THE LOST CONTINENT. Scuttlebutt has Sean Connery, Karen Allen and John Rhys-Davies returning . . . or maybe not. The story may involve the discovery of Atlantis, or The Garden of Eden . . . or maybe something else. All The Hound knows for sure is that, unless Messrs. Lucas and Spielberg stop dragging their heels, Harrison Ford will be so long in the tooth that they'll have to call it INDIANA JONES AND THE LOST CONTINENCE. (Oh, was that a tasteless joke? Depends . . .)

Meanwhile, it's as clear as pea soup that another EXORCIST flick is in the works. *Variety* reports that screenwriter William Wisher (of THE TERMINATOR films) has been hired by Morgan Creek Productions to pen a prequel to the original 1973 head-turner. The plot reportedly concerns Father Merrin (the Max Von Sydow character) and his first encounter with the demon Pazuzu who possessed little Linda Blair—and sent her flying in her four-poster better than anything in BEDKNOBS AND BROOMSTICKS. Those rumors of new footage of Father M. moshing at the Lolla-Pazuzu festival cannot be substantiated. Mother, make it stop!

It seems Warner Bros. is taking its time with plans for a fifth Bat-movie—which might be called BATMAN TRIUMPHANT. Seems studio execs feel less than triumphant over the last flick's box-office grosses. Although George

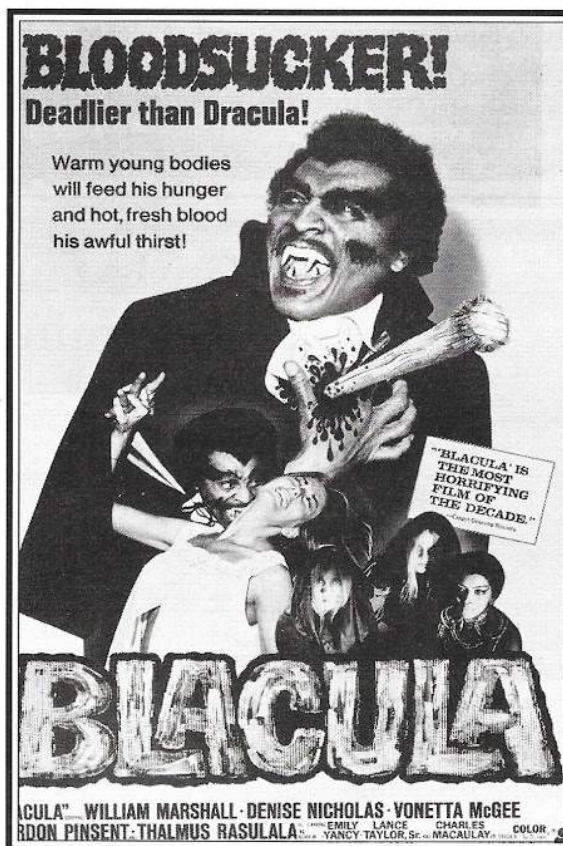
Clooney is contracted for two more Bat-films, rumor has it he wants out of the whole cape-and-cowl thing. Likewise, Chris O'Donnell and the ample Alicia Silverstone have reportedly not yet signed on the dotted line. Despite a potentially empty Batcave, the early chatter points to The Scarecrow (Jeremy Irons? Jeff Goldblum?) and Harley Quinn (Marisa Tomei? Mira Sorvino?) as special guest villains. A persistent rumor has Jack Nicholson returning as The Joker in an extended cameo. But, hey, at this point nobody really knows Jack.

Arthur Conan Doyle; GATTACA (Columbia), with the genetically-perfect Uma Thurman; and Dean Koontz's PHANTOMS (Miramax), also starring Mr. O'Toole. The STARSHIP TROOPERS (TriStar) deploy into theaters in November, along with ALIEN RESURRECTION (Fox), Disney's FLUBBER starring Robin Williams, and the stylish thriller NIGHTWATCH (Dimension), starring Ewan McGregor (the future Obi-Wan Kenobi of the STAR WARS prequels).

Cutthroat corporate competition gets mighty bloody in OFFICE KILLER (Dimension), starring Carol Kane and Molly Ringwald. It premieres in December, along with Kevin Costner's latest post-apocalyptic drama THE POSTMAN (Warner Bros.), and twin titans TITANIC (Fox) and TOMORROW NEVER DIES (United Artists). Celebrate the new year holler-day with Wes Craven's SCREAM: THE SEQUEL (Miramax). Joining it in January are DARK CITY (New Line), a futuristic thriller with William Hurt and Richard (ROCKY HORROR) O'Brien; the Marvel Comics vampire swashbuckler BLADE (New Line), starring Wesley Snipes; and slick horror flick FALLEN (Warner Bros.) with Denzel Washington as a policeman on the trail of a mysterious serial killer. Hmm . . . could it be . . . Satan? Ten-four, headquarters, that's a six-six-six.

Future Creature Features

Seagoing shivers await in the moist monster movie DEEP RISING (Hollywood) and in Michael Crichton's submerged SF thriller SPHERE (Warner Bros.), both washing ashore in February. If you prefer your monsters more earthbound, stake a claim for John Carpenter's action-packed horror flick VAMPIRES, starring James Woods and Sheryl



BLACULA (1972) sucks again during American Movie Classic's Halloween Horror Film Festival.

Now Playing

Now haunting your local movie house: I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER (Sony) penned by SCREAM-writer Kevin Williamson; FAIRYTALE: A TRUE STORY (Paramount), featuring Peter O'Toole as

THE X-FILES

Fox Video

Two sides each; CLV

\$29.98 per disc

Vol. 10: "Irresistible"/"Die Hand Die Verletzt"

Vol. 11: "Colony"/"End Game"

Vol. 12: "Humbug"/"Anasazi"

Another of X-FILES laserdisc releases has arrived from Fox Video, and some of the series' very best episodes are included.

Two memorably creepy entries are paired on the first disc. In "Irresistible," written by series creator Chris Carter, FBI Agents Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) and Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) encounter a Jeffrey Dahmer-like death fetishist who collects gory souvenirs from dead bodies—and soon resorts to murder to ensure his continued source of knickknacks. Nick Chinlund (of ERASER and CON AIR) does a quietly spooky turn as the avid "hobbyist." Bruce Weitz (HILL STREET BLUES) is also on hand as a local G-Man whose wacky theories make Mulder's seem prosaic.

The Satan Valley P.T.A. is in session in "Die Hand Die Verletzt" ("the hand that wounds"). A group of dotting, devil-worshipping parents and teachers get the short end of the pitchfork in an episode that features a shower of toads, a restless fetal pig, and a peckish boa constrictor. Dan Butler (FRASIER and the upcoming MORE TALES OF THE CITY) portrays one of the backsliding black-massers who wind up victims of the fiendish force they seek to control.

The ultrasecret government/alien project is further unveiled in the two-parter "Colony/End Game." Mulder's long-lost little sister Samantha—whose abduction we witnessed in flashback in "Little Green Men"—unexpectedly returns all grown up (and played by actress Megan Leitch, who has portrayed the daughter of Dr. Jekyll on the Canadian stage). She tells tales of the clandestine creation of human-alien hybrid clones, and warns of a shape-shifting bounty hunter who's out to kill them all. Lots of action, great special effects, and a spectacular conclusion in the Arctic Circle aboard an abandoned

Soviet sub make these two among the very best—and most lucid—of the alien "mythology" episodes.

Some X-Fans didn't know quite what to make of "Humbug," an episode that took a sharp left turn into broad humor—and introduced writer Darin Morgan, who became one of the series' story editors and most popular scripters. Mulder and Scully travel to Florida to investigate a series of bizarre murders among an enclave of circus sideshow performers. Over-the-top antics provided by the (real) sideshow denizens, and deadpan gems from Duchovny, make this show a sidesplitter. Morgan, the brother of X-FILES producer Glen Morgan, was nominated for a Edgar award by The Mystery Writers of America for his script.

David Duchovny collaborated with Chris Carter on the storyline of "Anasazi," the first chapter in an ambitious three-part mythology arc that begins with the accidental discovery of a strangely "alien" corpse on a Navajo reservation in New Mexico. Elsewhere, a renegade computer hacker strikes UFO-geek gold: he breaks into the government's secret files detailing its decades-long project involving ETs—Roswell, Majestic, the whole shebang. Soon Agent Mulder's nemesis, Cancer Man, skulks into action to retrieve the pilfered files, which furtively fall into Mulder's hands. Also making return appearances in this heavily-populated episode are conspiracy mavens The Lone Gunmen and weasily turncoat agent Alex Krycek, who uses deadly force to ensure the secrecy of "the project." And Mulder learns the murderous machinations extend to his own family . . .

"Anasazi" was THE X-FILES' second-season cliffhanger, and Fox Video has cannily recreated audiences' frustration by withholding the two concluding chapters—"The Blessing Way" and "Paper Clip"—for inclusion in the next set of laser releases. Breathe easy, X-Philes—they are in stores now.

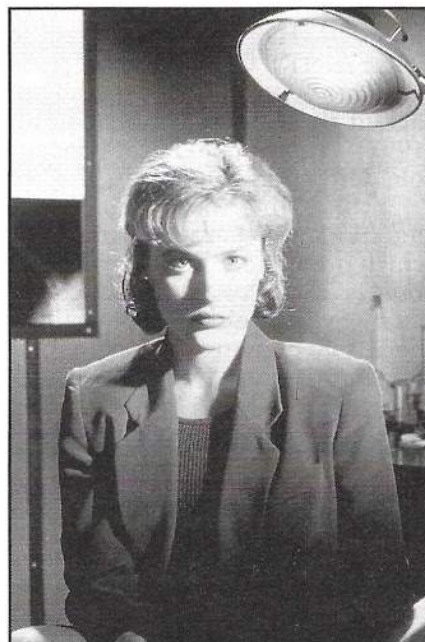
These discs offer the same excellent picture quality as the others in the series, and each episode features crisp surround stereo and

INSIDE THE X FILES

multiple chapter stops. As before, executive producer Carter opens each show with clips and background details that, fascinating as they may be, give away too much of the plot.

Virgin viewers (and you know who you are) are urged to skip these too informative intros and watch them later.

—John J. Mathews



TOP: Gillian Anderson as Agent Dana Scully, the part for which she recently copped an Emmy Award. **BOTTOM:** The Lone Gunmen (Bruce Harwood, Tom Braidwood, and Dean Haglund) make a return appearance in the episode "Anasazi," new to laser.

Saints Alive!

Voodoo! Zombies! A madman, played by John Carson, who seeks to gain wealth and power through the forbidden use of black magic!

Sounds like Hammer Film's chilling *PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES* (1966), doesn't it? Well, it isn't. It's an episode of one of the classic British TV shows of the Swinging Sixties: *THE SAINT*, starring Roger Moore as Leslie Charteris' immortal adventurer, Simon Templar.

The Saint (as Templar is known, thanks to his notorious "stick figure with halo" calling card) made his literary debut in 1928, in the novel *Meet the Tiger*. A decade later, he made his celluloid bow in *THE SAINT IN NEW YORK* (1938). Suave Louis Hayward played Simon in that RKO opus, and was followed by suave George Sanders (five films between 1939 and 1941) and suave Hugh Sinclair (two films, the first in 1941 and the second two years later). Coming full circle, Hayward once again took on the role for *THE SAINT'S GIRL FRIDAY* (1954).

Over 40 years later, not-so-suave Val Kilmer attacked the role of Simon Templar in *THE SAINT* (1997)—with the general consensus being that the role deftly defended itself, and won.

Still, Kilmer did manage to focus attention on this dynamic character, and the original TV show, which premiered in 1963 and lasted a mere three seasons, is a Saint of a different color. Roger Moore may not be everyone's cup of martini as James Bond, but there is no denying the fact that he was a super Saint. In fact, the word "suave" was invented for just such a portrayal as Moore's Simon Templar.



Happily, it's now possible to see this classic program on video in all its glory, thanks to Columbia House's Re-TV Video Library. The folks who recently unearthed *THE NIGHT STALKER* in all its gruesome glory have looked to Heaven and returned with *THE SAINT*, a beautifully packaged collection that presents two fast-moving episodes per tape. ("Sibao," the voodoo episode with John Carson, is paired with "Where the Money Is," an adventure featuring another Hammer alumni: Sandor Eles, of 1964's *EVIL OF FRANKENSTEIN*.)

For further information about Columbia House's presentation of *THE SAINT*, call 1-800-638-2922 for information.

—Drew Sullivan

NEWS HOUND

Continued from page 18

(*TWIN PEAKS*) Lee. Former vampire purveyor Michael Almereyda (director of *NADJA*) takes the

The classic *PURPLE NOON* (1960), based on Patricia Highsmith's *The Talented Mr. Ripley* and starring Alain Delon, is due for—what else?—a remake.



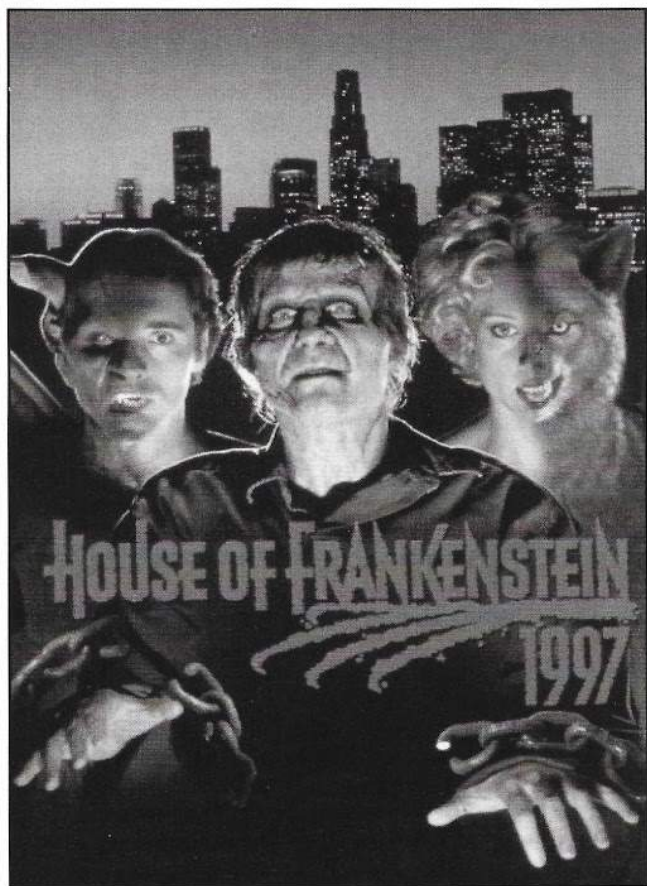
wraps off his latest thriller *THE MUMMY* (Trimark), starring Christopher Walken. It will be one of several sandy sarcophagi soon to be unearthed, with *BRAM STOKER'S LEGEND OF THE MUMMY* (with Louis Gossett Jr.), Anne Rice's *THE MUMMY* (still in development at Fox), and *TALOS THE MUMMY* (from Russell Mulcahy) all threatening to throttle theatergoers. Beware the beat of the cloth-wrapped feet . . .

Filmgoers will find a hefty share of sequels in the upcoming year (surprise, surprise), including *SPECIES 2*, *HELLRAISER 5*, *STAR TREK 9*, and *U.S. MARSHALS*, a sequel of sorts to *THE FUGITIVE*, with Tommy Lee Jones returning in his Oscar-winning role as Marshal Sam Gerard. Other planned

sequels that may surface in '98: *MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 2* (maybe with Oliver Stone at the helm), *SUPERMAN LIVES* (possibly directed by Tim Burton), and the gory grudge match *FREDDY VS. JASON*.

Now starting production at Warner Bros. is *A PERFECT MURDER*, a fresh adaptation of Frederick Knott's play *DIAL M FOR MURDER*, memorably filmed by Hitchcock in 1954. Michael Douglas stars as a man with murderous designs on his young wife, played by Gwyneth Paltrow. The creepy Viggo Mortensen (so devilish in *THE PROPHECY*) is also on hand . . . *THE TALENTED MR. RIPLEY* is an adaptation of the 1955 novel by Patricia Highsmith, best known for *Strangers on a Train*. Anthony Minghella (*THE ENGLISH PATIENT*) is set to direct. (You can find French filmmaker Rene Clement's lush 1960 version, *PURPLE*

Continued on page 23



HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN! It's a famous title, of course—one of the series of eight classic Universal Frankenstein films, the first to feature Frankenstein's Monster, Dracula, and the Wolf Man all in one picture, the last to star Boris Karloff (though not in the role that made him a star).

HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN—and Universal, in collaboration with NBC, has announced that it is remaking this 1944 monster bash as a four-hour miniseries, to premiere on Sunday, November 2 and Monday, November 3. At long last, horror fans will once again be traveling that well-worn path to Vasaria! To Reigelberg! To the Village of Frankenstein! To . . . Los Angeles???

Yep, HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN 1997 takes place in La La Land. What's more, Count Dracula and Larry Talbot are nowhere to be seen, there's no hunchbacked helper in sight (that's J. Carroll Naish pictured here from the original), and Frankie Boy looks nothing like the immortal Jack Pierce creation of the original series.

Instead, the new film, trading on the good name of a venerable house, concerns an evil real estate tycoon (Greg Wise) who opens a new nightclub (called guess what?) and tracks down Victor Frankenstein's undying creation to act as its centerpiece. (No, the evil real estate tycoon is not named McDougal.) Meanwhile, two cops named Vernon and Cha-Cha (Adrian Pasdar and Miquel Sandoval) are investigating a series of brutal, heartless crimes that, incredibly, haven't been perpetrated by the LA police themselves. Gruesome murders, in which the victims have either been drained of blood (think

Honey, I'm Home!

NBC's HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN 1997

vampire) or torn to shreds (think werewolf), are taking place all over the place. However, since bloodsuckers and lycanthropes are passé these days, the tabloids have dubbed the killer "The Midnight Raptor"—arousing visions of a sharp-fanged dinosaur dressed in top hat and cape, slinking down dark, fog-ridden alleys with a black medical bag in its claw.

You still with me?

Then you'll want to know that the accepted method for battling werewolves—silver bullets, silver canes, silver cream pitchers—has been replaced with a more practical means of defense: Mace. When shy, conservative, beautiful Grace Dawkins (Teri Polo) is attacked by a wolf, that's what she uses—but not before Wolfie connects with its razor-sharp claws.

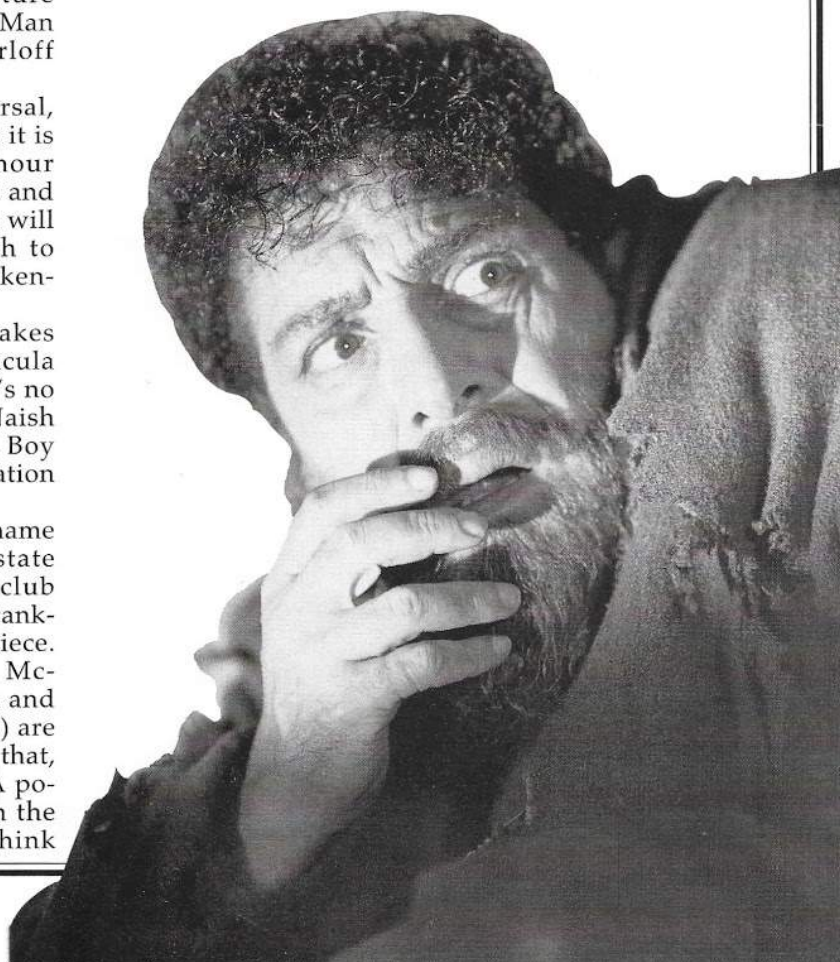
And you'll want to know that the Frankenstein Monster (Peter Crombie), when he finally makes it from the Frozen North to Sunny Cal, suffers from swollen feet, drops in at a shoe store, and frightens the manager.

And you'll want to know that the evil tycoon turns out to be somebody called the Master Vampire.

And you'll want to know that the Monster, having no luck finding a friendly blind old hermit in Los Angeles, befriends a friendly old derelict named Armando (Richard Libertini).

And you'll want to know . . . oh, you won't want to know? Can't say as I blame you . . .

—Drew Sullivan



More Tales of More Tales by Richard Valley

He was cut short by Peter Cipriani, shouting excitedly to his guests. "OK, don't crowd. One at a time, gentlemen, one at a time."

He handed a pair of binoculars to Rick Hampton, who aimed them in a northerly direction.

"Which building?" asked Rick.

"The shingled one. On Barbary Lane. That little house on the roof, see?"

"Oh, Jesus, look what he's—"

"What's he doing?" shrieked Arch.

—More Tales of the City

Armistead Maupin's *More Tales of the City* (1980) spawned perhaps the most notorious (also the most erotic and, arguably, funniest) sequence in the entire six-book series of Tales novels: the long distance romance between Brian Hawkins, standing naked in the window of his apartment atop 28 Barbary Lane, one hand holding a pair of binoculars to his eyes and the other otherwise engaged, and the mysterious, likewise occupied woman known as Lady Eleven, standing naked in

the window of an 11th floor apartment, in a building some distance across the city of San Francisco.

Shortly after MORE TALES OF THE CITY went into production with some of the key characters still uncast, rumors began to circulate. It was said that Paul Gross, who had played Brian in TALES OF THE CITY (1994) and gone on to the semi-successful series DUE SOUTH (and one of this year's two dull remakes of 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA), would not be returning. The reason: his wife objected to a role in which Gross would spend the bulk of his screen time monkey-spanking in the nude.

If the rumor is true, it's something of a precedent. More than one Hollywood wife has objected to her hubby's hot and heavy sex scenes with film's latest femme fatale, but this may be the first time a wife has ever objected to her hubby's hot and heavy sex scene with himself!

Some weeks after the cameras rolled, it was announced that Whip Hubley had inherited the part of Brian Hawkins.

Paul Gross isn't the only original (ahem!) member of the cast to (ahem! ahem!) limp away from Showtime's MORE TALES OF THE

CITY, however. Chloe Webb, who had signed on to repeat her portrayal of Mona Ramsey, suddenly flew the coop. Word had it that she would be replaced by Amanda Plummer, but ultimately it was Nina Siemaszko who stepped before the camera.

Also new to this latest TALES are Paul Hopkins (replacing Marcus D'Amico, who had stage commitments in London, as Michael Tolliver), Diana LeBlanc (replacing the veteran Nina Foch as Fran- nie Halcyon), and Francoise Robertson (replacing Cynda Williams as D'orothea Wilson).

Among those playing new characters are Colin Ferguson (as Burke, the man without a past), Jackie Burroughs (as Mother Mucca), Swoosie Kurtz (as hot to trot Lady Eleven), Domini Blythe (as Helena Parrish), and Ed Asner (as AP reporter Jack Lederer).

Returning original cast members are Olympia Dukakis (as landlady Anna Madrigal), Laura Linney (as Mary Ann Singleton), William Campbell (as Jon Fielding), Barbara Garrick (as DeDe Halcyon Day), Thomas Gibson (as Beauchamp Day), and Parker Posey (as Connie Bradshaw).



LEFT: Laura Linney returns in the role of Mary Ann Singleton, this time attracted to a man who can't remember his past. **SPELLBOUND**, anyway? **RIGHT:** The A-Gays (Paul Bartel, Scott Thompson, Dan Butler, and Brian Bedford) prepare for Brian Hawk's nightly performance.

Photo: Jean Demers, Showtime, 1997



Photo: Jean Demers, Showtime, 1997



NEWS HOUND

Continued from page 20

NOON, on video and laserdisc) . . . THE MASK OF ZORRO arrives in theaters this spring, with foxy Antonio Banderas behind the mask . . . Two tales of frightening fantasy that once again will be filmed: Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend* and Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*.

More literary adaptations: James Hadley Chase's mystery thriller *Just Another Sucker* will be the basis of Castle Rock's PALMETTO, starring Woody Harrelson and Elizabeth Shue . . . Columbia has purchased the rights to Don Winslow's series of mysteries featuring grad student/private eye Neal Carey. The first planned feature will be adapted from the Edgar-nominated *A Cool Breeze on the Underground* . . . Isaac Asimov's *Bicentennial Man*, L. Ron Hubbard's novella *Fear*, and Larry Niven's *Ringworld* trilogy are all in development as film projects.

Television Terrors

American Movie Classics throws a scare into cable TV viewers (even worse than their cable bill does) with their three-day Halloween horror film festival, running from October 30 to November 1. Among the 26 features are Hammer classics CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN and HORROR OF DRACULA, '50s favorites THE GIANT BEHEMOTH and THE BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS, Val Lewton chillers LEO-PARD MAN and ISLE OF THE DEAD, and a few seldom-screened hoots like BLACULA, THE MAZE, and Republic's 1946 CATMAN OF

PARIS . . . The Sci-Fi Channel definitely doesn't suck this October as it opens a vault of vicious vampires with THE BRIDES OF DRACULA, CAPTAIN KRONOS: VAMPIRE HUNTER, KISS OF EVIL, FRIGHT NIGHT, and a marathon of FOREVER KNIGHT episodes . . . Next year's cable TV offerings will include the six-hour BBC production INVASION EARTH on The Sci-Fi Channel, THE RIPPER starring Patrick Bergin on Encore, and Showtime's THE TALE OF SWEENEY TODD with Ben Kingsley and Joanna Lumley.

Ghouls in School

If you've picked up this issue of *Scarlet Street* any time between October 24 and November 23, and you live in the Chicago area, and you need a few good laughs, drag your bones to the Circle Theatre to see SATAN'S SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, a rock 'n' roll musical with book and lyrics by Harry McEwan and music by John McMahon. It's all about some school girls who enlist the aid of Satan (and his back-up singers) to reinstate their prom. McEwan, a regular performer at Eighty-Eights, the best piano bar in the Big Apple, first came up with the idea for the show back in 1990, and has seen it through several successful staged readings and a full production in Minneapolis, where it opened in 1991 to wide acclaim. He's currently at work on a play about Lizzie Borden, so he's obviously a man after our own grisly hearts.

For information about SATAN'S SCHOOL, call (708) 771-0700.

The Home Video Vault

Already ripe for rental: the Kurt Russell thriller BREAKDOWN and Val Kilmer's hellish attempt at THE SAINT (both from Paramount), the disaster-fest VOLCANO (Fox), and the scaly sleeper ANACONDA (Columbia-TriStar). Mike Myers' groovy AUSTIN POWERS (New Line) arrives for rental in late October, as does THE FIFTH ELEMENT (Columbia) and BATMAN AND ROBIN (Warner, \$22.98). Spielberg's THE LOST WORLD tramples video stores in November (Universal, \$22.98), along with the John Woo actioner FACE/OFF (Paramount, rental) and the slimy sci-fi hit MEN IN BLACK (bargain-priced from Columbia).

Universal is finally offering Fred Zinneman's top-notch 1973 thriller DAY OF THE JACKAL for sale on video this November at an affordable \$14.98. Also in November from Universal at the same nice bargain price: THE FRIGHTENERS, DUNE, THE CHAMBER, BORDELLO OF BLOOD, MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER 3000: THE MOVIE, and JOURNEY TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE SUN.

Gone, but never to be forgotten: directors George Schaefer and Tommy Carr, author Judith Merrill, historian Tony Thomas, filmmaker Shirley Clarke, and actors Brian Keith, Donald Curtis, Linda Stirling, Carol Forman, Brian Glover, Burgess Meredith, and beloved clown Red Skelton. God night and may God bless . . .



GOOD STUFF FROM THE THRILLER CLUB & TV TERROR SOCIETY



TOP 20 SCARIEST T.V. EPISODES

WAY OUT '61 Dissolve To Black
BUS STOP '62 I Kiss Your Shadow
THRILLER '60-'62 The Cheaters;
Pigeons from Hell
The Hungry Glass;
A Wig for Miss Devore;
Return of Andrew Bentley
NIGHT GALLERY '71- '72
The Doll; Return Of The Sorcerer;
Camera Obscura; Cool Air;
I'll Never Leave You, Ever
PANIC '57 Moth and the Flame
QUATERMASS '59 The Pit (BBC)
DICK POWELL SHOW '62 Clocks
ONE STEP BEYOND '60 The Clown
SUSPICION '57 Four O'Clock
BRECK GOLDEN SHOWCASE '61
The Picture of Dorian Gray
NORLISS TAPES '73 (98 min. pilot)
CIRCLE OF FEAR '73
Legion of Demons

TOP 13 TWISTED

T.V. EPISODES
FAMOUS GHOST STORIES
Tormented '61
ROUTE 66 '61 Thin White Line
BUS STOP '61-'62
A Lion Walks Among Us
NAKED CITY '61
A Case Study Of 2 Savages
WAY OUT '61
Death Wish; The Croaker
COMBAT! '63 Survival
NIGHT GALLERY Caterpillar '71;
Marmalade Wine '72
ONE STEP BEYOND '59 The Hand
JOHNNY STACCATO '60 Evil
UNTOUCHABLES '60
The Rusty Heller Story
STONEY BURKE '63 Forget No More

TEN BEST HITCHCOCK HOURS '62-'65

The Jar; The Magic Shop;
The Unlocked Window;
Where The Woodbine Twineth;
Sign of Satan; Consider Her Ways;
Photographer & The Undertaker;
Death Scene (Carradine);
The Final Escape; Beast in View

TOP 10 WEIRD MOVIES

DARK INTRUDER '65
THREE FACES OF FEAR '63
NIGHTMARE ALLEY '47
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SCREEN...



and Screen AGAIN!



Scarlet Street's Laser Review

DRACULA— PRINCE OF DARKNESS

Elite Entertainment
Two Sides CLV
\$49.98

The first in Elite's series of Hammer horror movies on laserdisc, *DRACULA—PRINCE OF DARKNESS* (1966) is another example of how small video companies can teach the big labels a thing or two about how to please a customer. What might have been a routine release of a film few would consider among Hammer's classics is, instead, a disc so packed with unique features as to make it one of the best lasers of the season.

The film uses the closing moments of *HORROR OF DRACULA* (1958) as a pretitile sequence out of necessity (the sequel was released a full seven years after its predecessor), but this tonic burst of excitement contrasts sharply with director Terence Fisher's methodical buildup of tension in the opening reels. The plot centers on four English travelers who find themselves stranded while on a trip through the Balkans. Seeking shelter in Castle Dracula, they are treated to more than their share of fine Transylvanian hospitality when the caretaker attempts to revive his fallen master. In the movie's most famous scene, the body of a freshly-slaughtered house guest is hung upside down, his life's blood oozing

over the ashes of Dracula, who materializes in a haze of smoke.

But the Count's gruesome introduction proves anticlimactic and the film's pace begins to flag despite stakings, chases, and assorted confrontations provided by Jimmy Sangster's script (here writing under his pseudonym John Sansom). For novelty, a watery death is contrived for Dracula, although the special effects team didn't realize that the old show biz rule of saving the best laugh for last doesn't apply to horror movies. Sure enough, the sight of Christopher Lee clumsily straddling surfer-like on a bogus block of ice brought down the entire house at my old neighborhood movie palace.

DRACULA—PRINCE OF DARKNESS was perhaps a mite disappointing to those who were unrealistically harboring expectations of a *HORROR OF DRACULA* sequel of equal quality to the original. Again, Lee is relegated to a mere support-



ing player, clinging to the background as a symbol of evil. But symbols make insufficient screen characters and, since he is denied even a single line of dialogue, one sympathizes with Lee's resistance to embrace the role. The film, nevertheless, is a vivid representation of Fisher's libidinal interpretation of the Bram Stoker novel, equating vampirism with the wanton sexuality that would dominate future Hammer productions. As in the first film, the victims seem to find their own sexuality only after a visit from the virile vampire. Once infected, it requires but a sharpened stake and a steady hand in order for them to revert to their prim and proper Victorian selves (although the process leaves them permanently inanimate).

The film almost plays second fiddle to the bonus features. Elite rounded up the four principals (Lee, Barbara Shelley, Francis Matthews, and Suzan Farmer) for a lecture track on which only Lee seems intent on "lecturing." The good-humored if slightly imperious actor rightfully commands the conversation, weighing in with his views of the Count, duly noting Fisher's contribution, and even getting in dead-on impersonations of John Gielgud, Humphrey Bogart, and W.C. Fields! The others happily chatter about their own reminiscences of the production, which seemed a congenial if uneventful one. (The "teatime" atmosphere was interrupted only when Shelley accidentally swallowed her own plastic fangs during her staking scene.)

The bonus theatrical trailers, one in combination with its cofeature *PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES*, appear to be transferred from clean 35MM sources, but the real treat is the inclusion of on-the-set 8MM home movie footage. Shot by Matthews' brother, and quite professionally, too, the four-minute reel (silent except for the lecture track) captures Fisher and the crew mulling about the familiar castle exteriors while the cast is glimpsed relaxing between takes. In a fortuitous stroke of luck, Mr. Matthews' visit coincided with the shooting of the climax, and the photographer didn't miss the opportunity to get fascinating shots of brother Francis and Lee rehearsing their final clash

and Lee's stunt double slipping through the mechanized "ice." It's an incredibly rare look at the workings at Hammer's Bray Studios that is worth the price of the disc.

DRACULA—PRINCE OF DARKNESS was the first Dracula film to be shot in scope and the laser is fittingly presented in letterbox format. Though the colors are slightly pale, the print used is excellent and Elite's transfer is commendable.

—Michael Brunas

PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES

Elite Entertainment

Both Sides CLV

\$49.98

Drums. Terror. Drums. Death. Voodoo Drums. Such is promised in **PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES** and such is delivered, in classic Hammer style. Here we have real zombies—not the bug-eyed sleepwalkers of the past, but rotting corpses reeking of the grave. The opening scenes, making lavish use of a voodoo ceremony, inundate us with blood, drums, and ritual aimed at the slightly exotic and always enticing Jacqueline Pearce. Yet this is not Haiti, but Cornwall, and things are definitely afoot, which Sylvia Forbes (Diane Clare) and her father, eminent physician Sir James Forbes (André Morell), soon discover. They have travelled to Cornwall to visit Sir James' star pupil, Dr. Peter Thompson (Brook Williams), and his wife Alice (Pearce).

Sir James and Sylvia arrive at Thompson's home to be greeted by a pale, weak and nervous Alice. The village is beset by an unknown yet fatal affliction—a dozen have died in a dozen months. The villagers blame Thompson's incompetence for the deaths. The doctor insists an autopsy is the only way to ascertain the cause of death, but the villagers refuse. Further, any post-mortem is denied by the village squire, Clive Hamilton (James Mason sound-alike John Carson).

Sir James and Thompson agree that the only way to get an autopsy is to dig up one of the corpses. The coffin proves empty. Reports of the missing corpse walking the countryside, and Alice's own mysterious death, spur Sir James to look to the unconventional for an answer. A cool and logical character, James lacks the flare of a Van Helsing yet

shares his willingness to readily embrace the supernatural. Making use of the local vicar's library, he diagnoses voodoo as the cause and zombies the effect. Sir James tracks the source back to Hamilton and a group of "young bloods" who serve as Hamilton's acolytes in the



voodoo ceremonies he oversees—ceremonies designed to make zombies that will labor in the mines beneath his estate . . .

As many have come to expect from Hammer, **PLAGUE** is visually lush and gorgeously composed, with classic British interiors and countrysides and superb photography. If you are familiar with the same company's **THE REPTILE**, you will find some striking similarities between it and **PLAGUE**; and with good reason. They were both filmed on the same sets, at the same time, with the same crew. Both were directed by John Gilling. John Elder wrote **THE REPTILE**'s screenplay, while Elder and Peter Bryan performed that function for **PLAGUE**.

The disc is in CLV mode, uncut and retaining the original 1.85:1 aspect ratio. The pristine transfer does justice to the high production values, preserving the rich colors and crisp (mono) soundtrack. A combo trailer for **PLAGUE OF THE ZOMBIES** and **DRACULA PRINCE OF DARKNESS** is included. Accomplades to Elite for helping Hammer's zombies to rise again!

—Michael Spampinato

BATMAN: THE MOVIE

Fox Video

Both Sides CLV

\$39.95

As Batman says in my favorite line from this film, "Some days you just can't get rid of a bomb!" And to prove it, here's a laserdisc release of **BATMAN: THE MOVIE**.

This big-screen incarnation of the '60s **BATMAN** television series, starring Adam West as the Caped Crusader and Burt Ward as the Kid in the Green Shorts, opens with a dedication that says, in part, "for all lovers of the ridiculous and the bizarre . . ." No kiddin'. The "plot" deals with the unholy alliance of four of Batman's deadliest TV foes. (Yes, four—Joel Schumacher wasn't the first to go overboard.) The Joker, Riddler, Penguin and Catwoman, played respectively by Cesar Romero, Frank Gorshin, Burgess Meredith, and Lee Meriwether, all combine their dastardly talents to kidnap Commodore Schmedlap, inventor of the world's best dehydrating machine. These purveyors of perfidy plan to precipitate pennies into their pockets by drying up the entire Security Council of the United World Organization, and ransoming their colorful little piles of dust for a billion bucks apiece. But who cares about that? Nobody ever dropped acid hoping for a trip with a sensible plot, and nobody ever watched **BATMAN** with any thought of that, either. Like, wow, the colors!

A lot of adjectives have been assigned the vintage TV series, from



"camp" to "crap" (and that's just the C's), and they can all be applied to the movie as well. As a small-screen to big-screen adaptation, the film captures the spirit of the show perfectly in all its lunacy, bombast, and psychedelia—and, of course, the famous tilted camera angles. If you loved the show, you'll love the movie. The bigger budget seems to have gone into the creation of some groovy new vehicles to supplement the classic (and, in my heart, the one true) Batmobile: the Batboat, the Batcopter, and the Batcycle with detachable sidecar/go-cart for the Boy Wonder. The Penguin Sub is also very cool with its flapping flipper drive and its stolen VOY-

AGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA sound effects. Everyone plays as over the top as they did in the series, and that's what we came to see, isn't it?

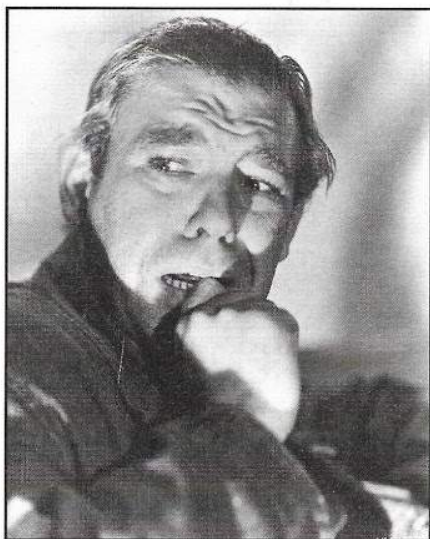
This 20th Century Fox laserdisc release has "remastered" as the principal selling point printed on the jacket. The release has digital and analog soundtracks and closed captioning, is recorded in CLV, and is presented in glorious TV tube aspect ratio.

—John E. Payne

OF MICE AND MEN

Image
Both Sides CLV
\$39.98

Writers covering the horror movie beat usually aren't coy in their criticism of Lon Chaney Jr., but the actor's limitations never stood in the way of his enduring popularity and the great store of affection fans have always had for him—which makes his resume-topping performance as Lenny Small, the hulking dimwit of *OF MICE AND MEN*, mandatory viewing for all Chaney watchers. Forget about Chaney's charity ball impersonation of Hungarian aristocracy in



SON OF DRACULA (1943) or his lumbering forays into ivory tower academia in the Inner Sanctum series. *OF MICE AND MEN*, like many of his later character actor assignments, vividly attests that Chaney's forte was rough-hewn, naturalistic American portrayals. But fate and the whims of producers dealt Chaney a bad hand. In-

stead of taking his place among the well-regarded performers of his specific type (Broderick Crawford, Ward Bond, etc.), Chaney found himself locked into a horror movie career for no other reason than his namesake.

The perennially popular, thrice-filmed John Steinbeck novella saw its definitive adaptation in this 1939 version, directed by Lewis Milestone. Steinbeck's simple parable provided an evocative microcosm for rural America during the Depression: a class system consisting of well-off land owners and the transient laborers who work under them. But at the heart of the story is the relationship between a pair of mismatched migrant farm laborers: the practical, quick-thinking George (Burgess Meredith) and his addle-brained companion, Lenny, who dream of a better life while bucking barley for day wages in California's Salinas Valley.

Steinbeck's writing was at its most powerful when depicting a society without safety nets. His purposeful inclusion of a detailed scene in which a scruffy old sheepdog who has outlived its usefulness is taken out to be shot foreshadows the film's climax. When Lenny unintentionally kills the boss' wife in his iron grip, the familiar Steinbeckian theme of "looking out for the other guy" takes a dark turn: George realizes he must shoot Lenny in order to protect him from "justice," as represented by an advancing sheriff's posse. It's a spell-binding, emotionally wrenching confrontation, buttressed by Milestone's flawless staging and a sensitively understated Aaron Copland score.

Steinbeck's lean, muscular prose is more perfectly matched to the uncluttered direction of Milestone than even John Ford, whose adaptation of the author's *THE GRAPES OF WRATH* would sweep the Oscars the following year. *OF MICE AND MEN* easily won critical plaudits, but performed poorly at the box office despite the fact that it's a less didactic, more wholly satisfying film than the Ford classic. Not unexpectedly, the film tempers Steinbeck's brusque detachment with a measured dose of Hollywood sentiment, yet it remains faithful to its literary source. Milestone stamps the landscape into the

fabric of the film, capturing the pastoral beauty of men and machines sweeping through the harvest and framing his cast through triangular stretches of conveyor belts or between the planks of wooden fences. The late Burgess Meredith and '40s leading lady Betty Field deliver their most memorable screen work and the director prods performances of unexpected depth from Charles Bickford and B-Western veteran Bob Steele.

After being out of circulation for many years following Steinbeck's death, *OF MICE AND MEN* is finally making the rounds on cable and laser. Image's print, suffering only from minor print wear and an occasional crackle on the soundtrack, should satisfy all but the most discriminating of viewers. It is a great way to see an American classic.

—Michael Brunas

SHE

MGM/UA Home Video
Both Side CLV
\$39.95

Palestine, 1918: three British soldiers find themselves out of work when peace breaks out. As we join them, they discuss their futures in a typical Mid-East "go go" bar surrounded by belly dancers. Major Holly (Peter Cushing), formerly a history professor, wishes to stay in the area and see firsthand the things he's only studied in books. Job (Bernard Cribbins), his loyal sergeant, figures he'll tag along. Young Leo Vincey (John Richardson) just wants to get laid. His first endeavor to achieve this goal, with a seductive trollop called Ustane (Rosenda Monteros), turns out to be a ruse to kidnap him, and he is forthwith conked on the noggin. He awakens to find the beautiful Ayesha (Ursula Andress), who cryptically tells us she's also known as She Who Waits. Ayesha promises Leo power and riches—and herself!—but he must first travel across the trackless wastes of the Desert of Lost Souls and meet her at her place, the legendary Lost City of Kuma in the Mountains of the Moon. Is this stuff great or what? Figuring he's traded up from the peasant girl, Leo agrees instantly. We know something is up, however, the minute we see evil-

looking high priest Bilali (Christopher Lee) hiding in the shadows.

Leo tells his friends that they all have to go off in search of Kuma. The requisite desert hardships are endured, and when all looks bleak sweet Ustane appears out of nowhere to help. She's fallen in love



with Leo from the one kiss he managed to plant before getting himself conked. Taken before Ayesha, known to the locals as She Who Must Be Obeyed, our stalwarts learn the fantastic truth: She is a 2,000-year-old Egyptian queen, and Leo is the reincarnation of her lost love, Kalikrates, whom she murdered in a jealous rage 2,000 years ago. She has found the secret of immortality, and in her grief has chosen to wait through the ages for him to return. She invites Leo to join her in immortality by bathing in a magical blue flame. Until then, though, no hanky panky. She may be a murderess and a tyrant, but she's no tramp.

Ustane, still hovering around Leo, declares her love and says that she will respect his preference for She, but that she herself will be obliged to go off and be pathetic for the rest of her life. Ayesha sees Leo and Ustane in a passionate embrace, and becomes She Who is Royally Pissed.

Of course everything falls apart after that, and everyone from Head Priest Bilali to Ayesha's slave driver (André Morell) put their own agendas into play. The big climax shoots for spectacle even though they're not working with much to begin with, but it is exciting, and

the end is either predictable or shocking, depending on the viewer's own jadedness.

SHE has always been a favorite of mine. The film has everything the fantasy adventure fan could want: British adventurers, wild savages, lost city, beautiful immortal queen, Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee, and revolting peasants. Suspension of disbelief may be a little tough, starting with accepting classic European blondes Andress and Richardson as ancient Egyptians. Christopher Lee looks all right, though; everyone knows that all evil Grand Viziers should look like Lee. The sets are pretty cheesy, the effects pretty obvious (especially the little rubber people being thrown into the lava pit), and the script full of holes. Hey, it's a Hammer film. But none of this takes away from the enjoyment of this classic escapist fantasy demi-epic. Cushing and Lee have never left us wanting, and Andress in her prime is spectacular to behold.

The film, shot in CinemaScope, is presented here in 2.35:1 widescreen with those damned annoying black bars that my mother hates so. An occasional bit of film damage flits by on the screen, but for the most part the print used is clean and sharp, and the Metrocolors glorious. The soundtrack has been digitally rerecorded from the original analog track, but the difference is negligible. This is not a special edition, so there are no extra audio tracks, trailers, or supplementary material at all. Just one good ol' fun movie.

Bilali, Bilali, Bilali, that's all folks! I had to say that.

—John E. Payne

MARS ATTACKS!

Warner Home Video
Both Side CLV
\$34.95

Had special effects pro Ray Harryhausen fashioned his 1956 sci-fi epic *EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS* with a great big budget and a sense of humor, *MARS ATTACKS!* is probably what he would have achieved. Undoubtedly that's a happy thought for some, and a sad thought for others.

Well, paint me with a happy face! *MARS ATTACKS!* caught me from the opening shot and held me in its

thrall for its entire 106 minute running time. Director Tim Burton assembled a grade A cast for this grade B excursion, beginning with Jack Nicholson making one of his periodic returns to his genre roots and including Glenn Close (in a wicked Nancy Reagan takeoff), Annette Bening, Pierce Brosnan, Martin Short, Sarah Jessica Parker, Lukas Haas, and Danny DeVito. Veteran performers Rod Steiger and Sylvia Sidney make welcome appearances, and even Tom Jones shows up as himself in the Las Vegas sequences. (Since he's himself, Burton lets him live.)

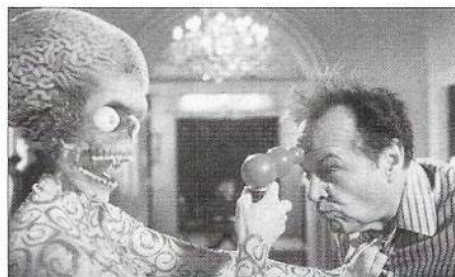
Danny Elfman provides a score to please those, like myself, who consider his music for Burton's *ED WOOD* (1994) the composer's best work. (The two films, in fact, make a dynamite double feature.)

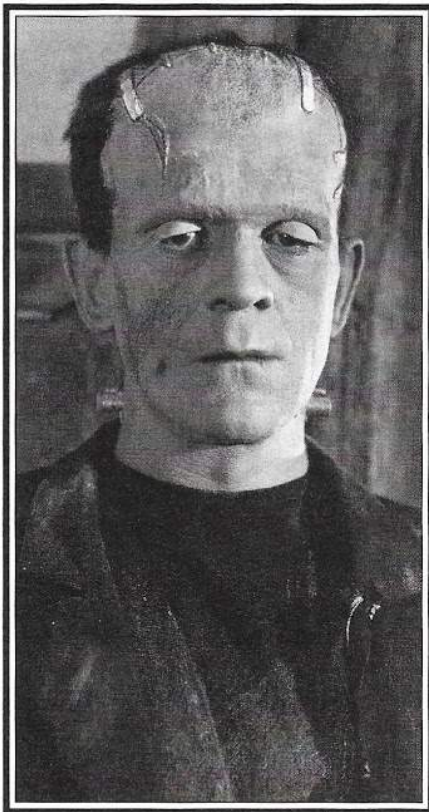
How close is all of this to *EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS*? Well, pretty close. *MARS ATTACKS!* may be officially based on those grisly Topps bubble gum cards of the 1960s, but it's far closer in spirit to the sci-fi flicks of the '50s. (When you're done thinking Harryhausen with a budget, think Ed Wood.) The film makes specific reference to *EARTH* in a number of scenes, including its funniest bit: a flying saucer that destroys and then changes the direction of a falling Washington Monument so that it will definitely squash a few victims. Harryhausen fans will like the saucer designs, too, not to mention the way this island Earth is finally saved from complete destruction.

Warner Home Video has done a spectacular job with this laserdisc, preserving the 2.35:1 ratio of its widescreen release. The sound and colors are crisp and clear and appropriately apocalyptic.

Yes, *MARS ATTACKS!* may have floundered theatrically in the wake of the thunderingly dull *INDEPENDENCE DAY*, but grab it—it's the better film by far!

—Drew Sullivan





Whale Hunt

An Interview With Christopher Bram

by Bob Madison



One of the more interesting recent books for Scarlet Readers has been Christopher Bram's *Father of Frankenstein*, which tells the fictional story of famed director James Whale's final days. The novel, reviewed back in *Scarlet Street* #19, has been made into a film tentatively titled *GODS AND MONSTERS*, starring Sir Ian McKellan as Whale and Brendan Fraser as Clay Boone, the handyman chosen by the director as his murderer.

Scarlet Street caught up with Christopher Bram at a café near his Greenwich Village home. Bram is the author of several novels, including the World War II mystery, *Hold Tight*. Here, Bram tells us of the genesis of *Father of Frankenstein*, and his choice for Bill Clinton in the movie version of his latest book, *Gossip* . . .

Scarlet Street: Are you a native New Yorker?

Christopher Bram: Oh, no. I grew up in Virginia, outside of Norfolk. It's a Navy town, hence my book *Hold Tight*, and the number of military stories in my work.

SS: Was your father in the military?

CB: No, he wasn't. If he were, I probably would never have wanted to write about the military! But all of it—Army, Navy, has always intrigued me.

SS: And are you a non-service person yourself?

CB: Well, I went to school on an ROTC scholarship. I only got as far as boot camp, though, before they kicked me out for migraine headaches. Curiously, the migraines went away a few years later when I started sleeping with men. My body knew better than I did.

SS: Then you drifted where?

CB: When I finished school, I hung around in Williamsburg for a couple of years, writing a novel, which I still haven't published. Every writer should have one unpublished novel in his drawer, and that was mine. Then, after about three years, I came to New York City in 1978.

SS: You always wanted to be a writer?

CB: There were little distractions along the way—the biggest one being wanting to be a movie director. Upon leaving college, that was my burning ambition. I made a couple of short films. I happened to grow up during what was, in retrospect, one of the golden ages of film. The late '60s, early '70s, that was a time when exciting films were being made regularly. Robert Altman, Martin Scorsese's first films . . . I was very much an auteurist. It was after I had fallen in love with contemporary film that I wanted to know all about the history of the medium. That's when I started

watching old films, particularly silent films. I would watch them as if they were made by contemporaries. I never understood the feeling that these films were "oh-so-quaint." No, they're not!

SS: Actually, some of them are really quite twisted and depraved.

CB: Well, that what's exciting! The best of them have a contemporary bite. Some of them are like raw id. It was only later that I stumbled upon James Whale.

SS: What happened to your dreams of being a director?

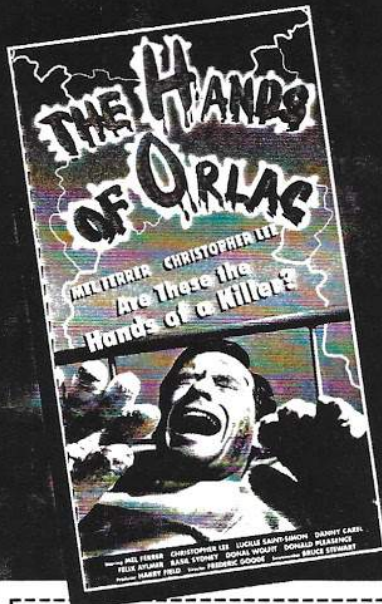
CB: It happened slowly: my first writing would be movies in my head. But instead of writing them in screenplay form, I wrote them as stories, as fiction. In the course of doing that, I realized how much I enjoyed it . . . probably more than I would've enjoyed directing. First off, you can do it alone.

SS: It's not collaborative.

CB: I miss that part of it. I envy people who work in the collaborative arts. I have friends who are playwrights, and they get to work with actors. That must be so exciting! They tell me it's exciting with the right actor, but when your work is in the hands of a fool it's the worst thing in the world! To be a director, you have to have a kind of ruthlessness, a thick skin, and a gift for bullshit.

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LEFT: It's teatime on the set of *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1935), with Colin Clive, Elsa Lanchester, and James Whale. RIGHT: Mad doctors Pretorius (Ernest Thesiger) and Frankenstein (Clive) give life to their Bride (Lanchester). NEXT PAGE: Writer Christopher Bram on the remarkable recreation of the *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN* set for *GODS AND MONSTERS*.

SS: So you became a writer.

CB: Well, first I wrote a novel I couldn't get published, a straight novel. I worked hard on it for seven years, while I was doing various jobs. When I couldn't sell it, I figured I would write something that I wanted to write. And I wanted to write a novel about being gay. So I wrote *Surprising Myself*, a first-person comic novel. It took me seven years to write, and two to sell. Finished it in 1984. When I couldn't sell *Surprising Myself* at first, I thought I'd try something even more different. So I started *Hold Tight*. I thought to do a thriller, because it seemed that thrillers, no matter how bad they were, had a way of getting published! I had read a number of really badly written thrillers, but they all had the suspense and plot line to hold interest. A friend told me a rumor that the FBI and Navy Intelligence ran a male brothel during World War Two. I thought, "What a great subject!" Initially I thought of it as a movie, but then I finally saw it as a novel. I found I enjoyed entering this totally different world.

SS: What kind of research was involved to write the story?

CB: Newspapers, books—it was all somewhat accidental. There was a good bit of research involved, but it was mostly with existing, printed sources. The thing that was a gold mine was Donald Bining's diaries. He was in New York, and in his 20s during the war, and he kept a daily diary. He has since published it, and for attitudes, and the amount of sex going on and all of that, it

was a gold mine. At that point Alan Baraboy's *Coming Out Under Fire* had not been published. If it had, I might not have written my book. I wanted to know what it was to be gay in New York during the war, and if I had read Baraboy's book, I would've known, and it wouldn't have been nearly as much fun to work on. But fortunately, his book came out two years after mine.

SS: Would you consider writing another thriller?

CB: Well, the book I'm working on now is sort of a thriller. I don't like to repeat myself; I like to try out different things. In some ways, I'm like a film director who likes to try his hand at different genres, different periods, different subjects. The books all have in common a gay protagonist at the center. And I like to think that I twist and turn the genres around to make them mine.

SS: Does having a gay protagonist, and being an openly gay writer, limit your audience?

CB: I'm sure it does keep some people away.

SS: Is that an important consideration for you?

CB: Not really. I wrote a straight book, aimed at a larger market. I think the chief reason I could never get it published was that my heart wasn't in it. With gay books, with books with some kind of gay center, and with straight characters in them as well, in terms of marketing and the way critics will read it, it does have reduced reception. But it also has a guaranteed reception; there is a real audience, a solid audience out there. I have a couple of

straight writer friends who envy gay writers because we have a built-in audience. They don't. They say they never know who their readers are. I like to think anybody can read my books and find something to respond to in them.

SS: While the protagonist of *Father of Frankenstein*, James Whale, is gay, it is not a "gay novel."

CB: Well, the second protagonist is straight. And the role homosexuality plays in the story is relatively small; it's not the center. Most gay fiction is about more than just being gay.

SS: Why James Whale?

CB: That was a happy accident. I knew the films, the horror films in particular, and *SHOW BOAT*. I absolutely loved them. I think *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN* is one of the great American movies, right up there with *CITIZEN KANE* and *SUNSET BOULEVARD* and *BONNIE AND CLYDE*. These movies have a kind of electricity about them, and are constantly turning this way and that. They're not only exciting to watch, but they explode genres, jump genres . . . or even transcend them. It's frustrating that *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN* is considered "just another horror movie." It's not. But then, the best horror movies are "not just horror films." The book didn't begin to happen until Brian Skie, a friend of mine who made some documentaries for the BBC, and I had dinner one night. He loved Whale's movies, too, and wanted to make a documentary about them. He knew some things about Whale that I

didn't know, and I knew some things he didn't know, and we tossed it around. There is no interview footage of Whale; there are only a few photographs. There are very few letters. So Brian decided that he had to come up with a fictional framework for the documentary, and asked if I had any ideas. Immediately, my mind started snapping with them. The beginning of the book, for instance, the dark and stormy night that turns into a hillside in Southern California, came to me that very night. So did the title, *Father of Frankenstein*. What we talked about stuck with me. I did a little research, jotted down a few notes, and I talked it over with my boyfriend, Draper, who is a filmmaker, and who said it seemed more like a novel than a movie. Then I put it aside, and finished *Almost History*. While looking around for my next project, my thoughts on James Whale came back to me. I did a little more research. The things that fascinated me about Whale were not just his movies, or the fact that he was gay—it was his past. He had a working-class background, and once in Hollywood, he invented this whole new persona for himself. But he actually worked in a factory until he was 25. I was also fascinated to learn he served in the trenches during the First World War. In all those '30s horror films, there's this feeling of the War. Some of them, like *THE BLACK CAT*, overtly address it. But even in films where it's never mentioned, you can feel it. So I was drawn by that, which also connected with my interest in the military. So I wrote Brian and asked if I could take some of the ideas we discussed, and use them in a novel. And he wrote back, saying, "Please do! They were your ideas, so do write this book, which will bring attention to Whale and maybe I can get my documentary done!" He had been trying to get his project off the ground, and it seemed that nobody was interested in James Whale.

SS: Such little attention is paid to Hollywood history.

CB: I think there will remain a minority of freaks, like us, who genuinely care. It will remain a minority, but we will stay. Before the emergence of television in the '50s, older films were just written off. Occasionally, a few standard films

were rereleased. But it's just incredible, the degree with which older films were just forgotten. *THE LATE SHOW* really did create a much larger audience for old films than had existed before.

SS: How extensive was your research for *Father of Frankenstein*?

CB: I read the two biographies. There is a lot of nonsense written about Whale. James Curtis' biography is awfully sketchy, but when he doesn't know something, he leaves it blank, which freed my imagination. He had only a paragraph on Whale's service during



Photo: David J. Skal

the First World War, and some of it is wrong. And some of it is contradictory—at one point he says that Whale delayed enlisting, but later he says Whale enlisted in August 1914, and that's the beginning of the war! Also he glosses over the fact that Whale, a working-class man, became an officer.

SS: So James Whale's war stories in the novel are . . .

CB: Completely fictional.

SS: Was it in your research that you came up with the book's cameos? Everyone from Garbo and Cukor to Karloff and Laughton?

CB: Well, Whale did know Charles Laughton and his wife, Elsa Lanchester. That's one of the anecdotes in the book that really did happen. When Lanchester and Laughton first come to Hollywood, they are

taken out to the Brown Derby by James Whale—that was true, and Lanchester wrote about it in her autobiography. As for the encounter with Garbo at the premiere of *CAMILLE*, well, it's true that David Lewis, Whale's lover, was the associate producer on that film, and he basically inherited it after Thalberg died. The rest of the scene is completely fictional. It's funny how one reviewer commented: "And he includes a lovely, too little known anecdote about Garbo and Whale at the premiere of *CAMILLE*." I'm kind of annoyed that he didn't realize I made that up, and kind of flattered, too.

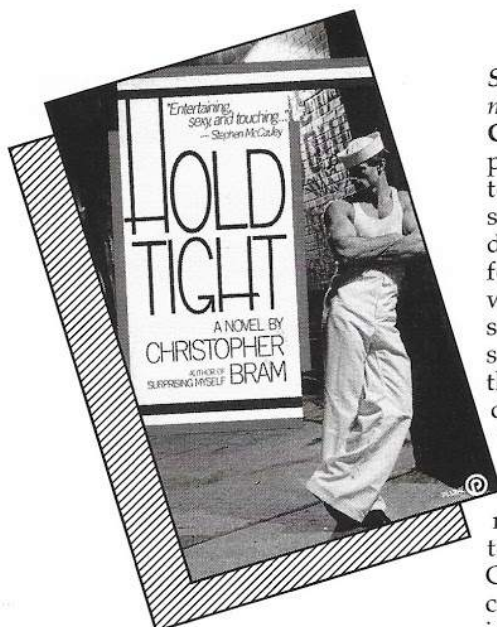
SS: The flashbacks to the making of *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN* are completely fabricated?

CB: Completely fabricated. All the stuff about Colin Clive and Ernest Thesiger is made up, but true in general. Dr. Pretorious was written with Thesiger in mind, and he was famous for having a strange, campy sense of humor—and he was also a veteran. Clive had very divided feelings about his own sexuality, and he was also very depressive and an alcoholic. But the actual scenes I have in the book are made up. Whale liked to improvise on the set; he was known for not always following the script. I invented the bit when Elsa Lanchester first sees herself as the Bride, and starts to twist her head from side to side, which on the spur of the moment gives Whale the idea for the jump cuts in the film. I did that to show Whale's ability to improvise on the set. But then, later on, I came

upon a copy of the script for *BRIDE*, and those shots are not in there. It was improvised! How he arrived at it, I don't know—but it wasn't planned in advance.

SS: You portray Boris Karloff as dour and gloomy. People are divided on Karloff—some think he was warm and friendly, while others remember a man who was distant and cold. Why did you choose the latter?

CB: It was more interesting that way. I've always been intrigued by the latter version. He was always the professional, but also very private. I always liked the story of how later in his career, when he was doing *THE RAVEN*, the clowning and improvisation on the set by both Peter Lorre and Vincent Price drove him crazy. I liked that image and tried to incorporate that.



SS: It works. Karloff didn't agree with Whale on the Monster's drowning of the little girl in the first film, and on the Monster's speech in the second.

CB: I agree with Whale! His speaking opened a whole new dimension to the Monster.

SS: What was genesis of Boone, the novel's other protagonist?

CB: One of the things that had appealed to me when Brian Skie first told me about Whale was that the swimming pool in which Whale drowned was built one month before he died. I later found out that wasn't true, but I originally constructed the novel around the swimming pool being dug—that as the ground was broken, Whale excavated his past. It was one of those silly, pretentious ideas that, if you're smart, you discard.

Originally, Boone was one of the men digging the pool, a big, not terribly bright, sort of misplaced California redneck who would become intrigued by Whale. Well, doing research, I found out the swimming pool was really dug six years earlier. And I also thought it was kind of a silly idea to juxtapose the pool construction and the scenes from the past. But I kept the character, Clay Boone, and I built the plot from there.

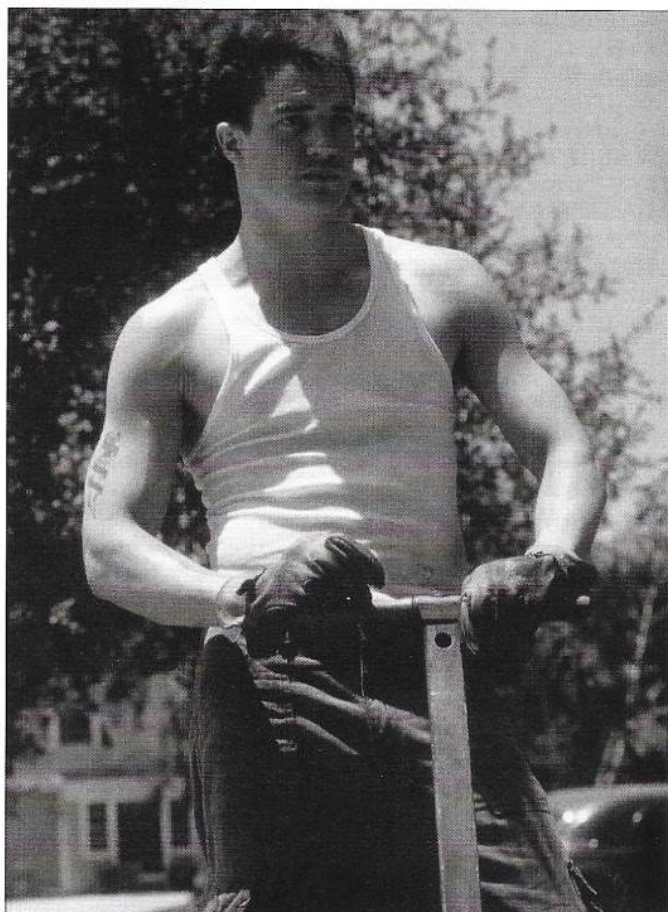
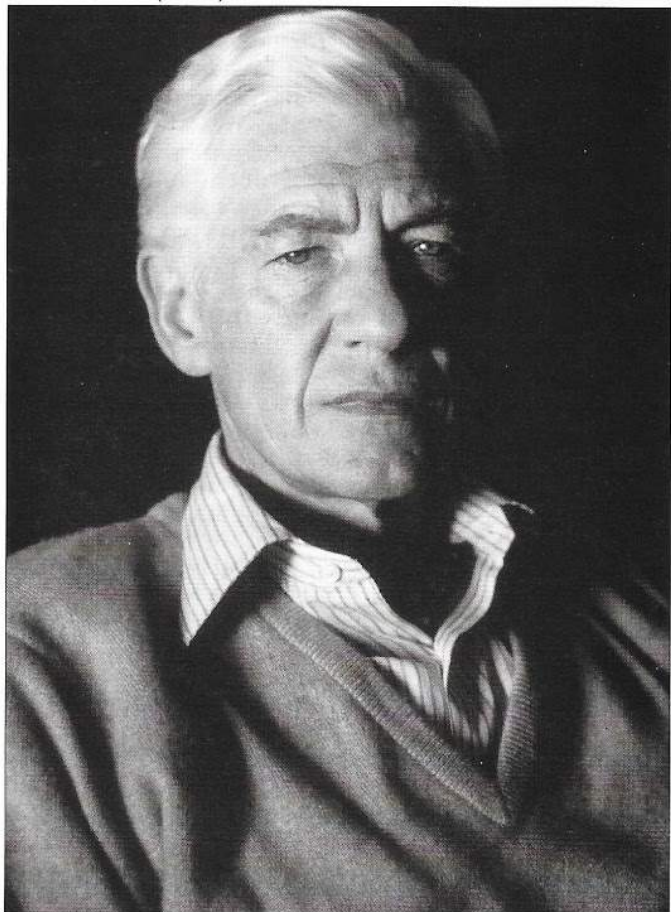
SS: Boone is a terrific character. One has this sense that he feels trapped by life, that he had a real need for a "war story," some intense event in his life that he could put into his personal mythology.

CB: I kept finding things about Boone. I conceived of Boone the way Whale thought of him: this big, dumb, dangerous thug. As I worked on him, I found I wanted to find other things in him. And I did.

SS: Is the mystery surrounding Whale's suicide/homicide satisfactorily cleared up?

CB: I think so. David Lewis foolishly withheld Whale's suicide note for more than 20 years. He didn't release it until Curtis did the book. There was no reason for anyone to have killed Whale. He had been ill the previous year; he'd had a stroke. He had been extremely depressed. The only thing I found strange was that he threw himself into the shallow end. He hit his head doing so, and the blow rendered him unconscious and he

ABOVE: Christopher Bram's 1988 thriller *Hold Tight* was about an undercover (and under the covers) sailor in a male brothel circa World War Two. LEFT: Sir Ian McKellan as the fictionalized James Whale of *GODS AND MONSTERS*, based on Bram's *Father of Frankenstein*. RIGHT: Brendan Fraser as Clay Boone, the object of Whale's desire—for a murderer, not a lover. NEXT PAGE: James Whale prepares to direct a scene from *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1935)



drowned. I think that, if you're going to drown yourself, you jump in the deep end. But Whale never did learn to swim, even though he had this big pool out back. I must confess, while approaching the end of the novel, I wondered what would happen if I did have Boone kill Whale. It's the expectation I set up from the start, and I had that option, but I decided not to go with it.

SS: What about David Lewis?

CB: They met in the early '30s and stayed together until the '50s. They stayed good friends after they broke up. From the Curtis biography, the impression I got was that he was old-fashioned, very reserved, very afraid of being labeled gay.

SS: The book has been retitled *GODS AND MONSTERS* for the film.

CB: Yes. The director's name is Bill Condon, he also wrote the screenplay. I felt comfortable with him right away. He loved the book, and he loves Whale. He wanted to write lots of Whale's films into it, but couldn't work with any of them but *THE INVISIBLE MAN*. Clive Barker is the executive producer.

SS: Sir Ian McKellan plays James Whale.

CB: Bill wanted Peter O'Toole. I wanted McKellen.

SS: Casting Clay Boone was difficult, wasn't it? What did you think the part needed?

CB: A Brad Pitt who could act, a young Nick Nolte . . .

SS: Word has it that Brendan Fraser is wonderful in the role. Are you going to return to horror films again in some way?

CB: Funny, I don't have a natural inclination for horror, but somehow I keep coming back to it. My one other novel about film is *In Memory of Angel Clare*, which is about a circle of friends who inherit the last boyfriend of their buddy Clarence, who died the year before. Clarence wanted to be a filmmaker; he made a couple of shorts, but his only feature film was a cheesy horror flick called *DISCO OF THE DAMNED*.

SS: What's your next project?

CB: The next project's working title is *Gossip*. It's sort of a black, political comedy. It's about sex, politics, and gossip.



SS: And when *Gossip* becomes a film, you'll want a young Nick Nolte to play Bill Clinton?

CB: I was thinking of an old Brad Pitt!

Coming Soon: Clive Barker

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Him and Me A Personal Slice of the Dracula Century

by David J. Skal

This is the true story of how I decided to become a vampire, but finally settled for a more fulfilling life as Dracula's helper.

A few weeks before Halloween 1962, when I was 10 years old, the threatened prank of the season wasn't toilet-papered fences, but the deployment of nuclear warheads, aimed at the American mainland from Cuba. I had been looking forward to growing up, but President Kennedy's grim announcements on television strongly indicated that this might not be in the cards. While waiting for my untimely incineration, I went to the library and pored over the pictures of fallout shelters in magazines. The people inside them looked like ordinary suburbanites, but more monastic. They sat calmly among their stockpiles of rations, listened to radios for

instructions, or lay in motionless repose on minimalist cots, staring at the bare walls. The fallout shelter was a lot like a crypt, where people existed in a strange half-life poised precariously between consumer nirvana and nuclear oblivion. They were something like vampires, I realized, atomic-age undeath shielding itself from a nasty nuclear sun. In other books, I found graphic pictures of atomic bomb survivors. They, too, looked like the living dead—walking, rotting corpses. It was possible that everyone I knew in Garfield Heights, Ohio, might look just like this, or worse, in the very near future.

The October issue of *Boy's Life* magazine had come in the mail with a full page color advertisement dripping with its own kind of death anxiety: Aurora Plastics' model kits of the Wolf Man, Frankenstein, and Dracula, now available for 98 cents. I was fascinated by the illustrations, especially the steely, piercing gaze of the Count. He was all about control and survival at a time in which I felt in control of nothing and unlikely to survive.

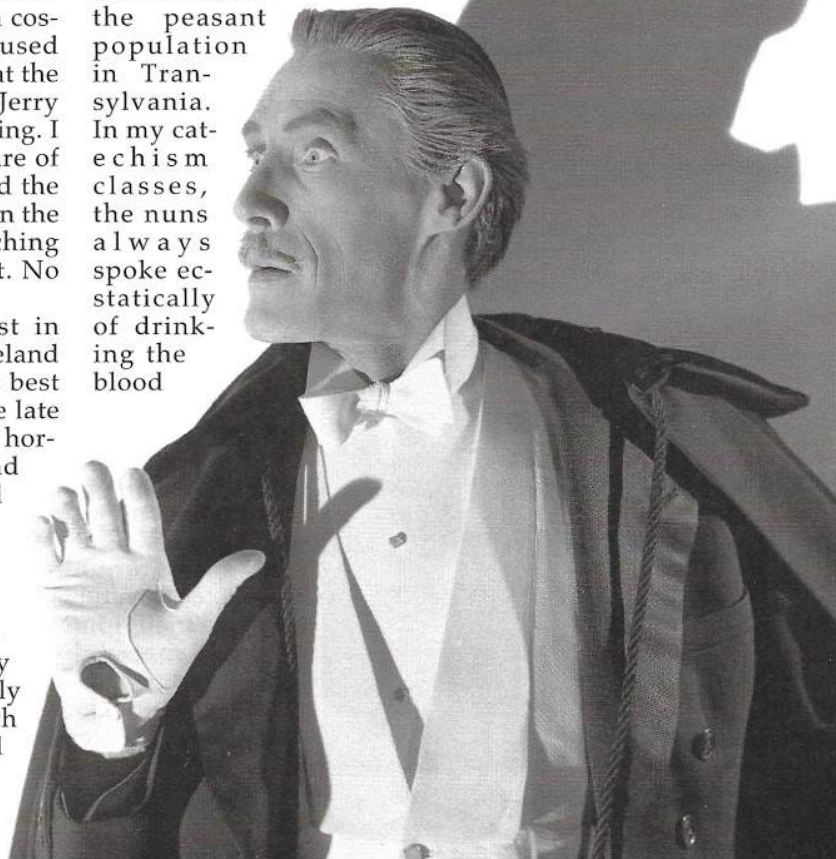
We didn't have a fallout shelter, but I liked the idea of not having to die. I actually knew very little about vampires, except that they wore fancy clothes, drank your blood, and that they, if kept out of the sun, could live forever. My very first exposure to Dracula was a skit on THE GARRY MOORE SHOW, in which Durward Kirby played the Count, lurking in the closets of a suburban home. Early on, I was puzzled that Dracula was always considered a monster, but didn't look like other monsters. He looked like some kind of magician or ringmaster. Nevertheless, he was the monster that always interested me the most.

Part of the attraction came from youthful laziness. Dracula was an easy costume to do for Halloween, much easier than the other monsters. All you needed was some white powder, an eyebrow pencil, plastic fangs, and Vaseline in your hair. While the missile crisis unfolded, I started working on my Halloween costume. I didn't have "real" vampire fangs, so I used those goofy wax teeth you used to be able to buy at the candy counter for a penny. The effect was more Jerry Lewis than Bela Lugosi, but at least it was something. I wore my white Sunday shirt, and tied a big square of black satin around my neck for a cape. I practiced the stare and hand movements of Lugosi as depicted in the advertisement for the Aurora monster kits. Arching the back of my hand really hurt, but I kept at it. No pain, no gain.

The missile crisis waned, but my interest in Dracula and monsters remained. Although Cleveland television was blessed with one of the country's best horror movie hosts—Ghoulardi, portrayed by the late Ernie Anderson—I was deprived of the Universal horror classics for most of the 1960s. The Cleveland stations dropped the "Shock!" series of Universal monster pictures long before my interest in horror was piqued (although I still remember seeing, and being fascinated by, FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN on TV around the age of seven). Ghoulardi specialized in AIP and Allied Artists pictures from the late 1950s, and so my only access to the Universal films was frustratingly secondhand, through illustrated features in such magazines as *Famous Monsters of Filmland* and *Castle of Frankenstein*.

My first monster magazine (meaning the first one I actually owned, took home, read to pieces) was the April 1963 issue of *Famous Monsters*. This, of course, was the Dracula "filmbook" issue with "Photos From Bela Lugosi's Own Scrapbook." I had been haunting the magazine rack at Jay's Drug Store for several months, and had surreptitiously read, over a period of several store visits, the previous issue on BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN. My parents had already laid down the law on *Mad* magazine—it was a "sick," subversive rag, never to be brought into the house again—and I can't really remember how I convinced my father to buy *Famous Monsters* for me, but I did. I took the magazine to my room and read it from cover to cover, and then I read it again. Dracula didn't just come out of some graveyard—he had a whole castle, with big winding staircases where he could strike poses and strangle victims.

There were no castles in Garfield Heights, but I lived in a house opposite a big Catholic hospital and its adjacent convent. The hospital was modern; the convent was one of the few really old buildings anywhere nearby; old, dark, and, to my imagination, castle-like, with mullioned windows and skulking nuns. A popular suburban legend had it that the nuns were charged with the grim nocturnal task of secretly burying amputated limbs on the convent grounds. (Since it was a Catholic hospital, any leftovers from operations couldn't be cremated.) It didn't take much for me to start imagining the black-robed sisters as a secret coven of vampires—I even wrote some stories in which they came flapping down from their fortress into our blue-collar neighborhood of tract houses to slake their unnatural thirsts at the throats of working-class sleepers—just the way Dracula decimated the peasant population in Transylvania. In my catechism classes, the nuns always spoke ecstatically of drinking the blood





and eating the body of Christ. Since Christ couldn't be expected back anytime soon, it seemed only logical that the sisters might well have to find other sources of nourishment. I always half-expected to see a red trickle escaping the corner of one of the nun's mouths—hard, dry mouths, with lines at the corners like little fishhooks. But the trickles never came.

Unable to see Dracula, I imagined Dracula everywhere. The convent was the castle, my neighbors were the unsuspecting villagers, and the knotty-pine window seat in my room became my "coffin"—I made "handles" out of metallic gift-wrap tape. (Later, I had a transportable, backup "coffin" in the form of a big corrugated box I would fill up with my monster magazines and other treasured possessions and drag down to the basement during the inevitable spring and summer tornado alerts. Let the house get blown to smithereens—my monsters weren't going anywhere!)

Odd as it may strike younger readers, there were no VCRs or Blockbuster Video outlets in the early 1960s, no cable networks showing film classics 24 hours a day, no real way to see classic movies unless a television station decided to show them to you. On Saturdays during the school year, I began to haunt the newspaper morgue at the Cleveland Public Library downtown, filling out call slip after call slip to have wheeled carts of bound, 1931 copies of the *Cleveland Press* and *Plain Dealer* delivered to me from the bowels of the earth. I wanted to know what it was like to be alive in 1931, and see DRACULA approaching, inexorably, in the movie advertisements. From *Famous Monsters*, I knew that the movie had been released in February 1931, so I started there, not knowing that back in the 1930s, movies didn't open at the same time all across the country, and that cities like Cleveland sometimes had to wait a month or more for the latest releases. The newsprint was brittle, and turning the pages, one fragile leaf at a time, was very slow going. Finally, in March 1931, the first ads appeared: "His Kiss Was Like The Icy Breath Of Death, Yet No Woman Could Resist!" My hands started trembling. The ads were small at first, but each day





they got bigger, like a vampire's hard-on. "What Does He Do At Night? Where Does He Go During The Day? Who Is This Strange, Awful Man, Dead 500 Years And Yet Alive?"

I looked at the other advertisements to see what the 1931 people waiting for DRACULA to arrive in Cleveland looked like. The slouchy, Art Deco women in the department store ads were the perfect victims, dazed and somnolent, Depression-age "nifties" who couldn't wait for the icy breath of death. I imagined them lining up at the Hippodrome theater on Euclid Avenue, a sea of cloche hats and clutch purses, a hushed murmur of obedient anticipation.

Since I knew deep down that DRACULA had to be the greatest movie ever made, it surprised and disturbed me that a lot of the original reviews were pretty lukewarm. But from these capsule descriptions, I could at least piece together an idea of the kinds of things that went on in the film. *Famous Monsters* had published a lot of pictures from DRACULA, but for some reason it didn't tell the story, and this was almost as frustrating as not being able to see the movie. I had my school librarian order a copy of the Stoker novel on interlibrary loan. It was the old Modern Library edition, with a picture of Dracula on the cover that didn't look anything like Bela Lugosi—he had a big droopy mustache—and this confused me. I inhaled the whole book in the course of an afternoon, and could tell right away that it was very different from the movie. But it gave me some clues.

You must understand that my quest to see Tod Browning's DRACULA started at the age of 10 and was not successful until I was 16—in other words, the whole ordeal was the equivalent of more than half of my life at the time I began the hunt. As the years rolled on, my despair at ever seeing the film increased. Oh, there was that 10-minute, 8mm Castle Films abridgement, but it only used the boring parts of the movie—there wasn't a single shot of Transylvania, the castle, and the staircase! I scoured the weekly issues of *TV Guide*, praying that Cleveland's long embargo on the Universal horror films would be lifted, but no such luck . . . week after week,



Ghoulardi kept showing things like *ATTACK OF THE CRAB MONSTERS* and *THE HYPNOTIC EYE*. One week, however, my heart almost stopped when I came across the listing: *DRACULA* (Melodrama, 1931) Bela Lugosi, David Manners.



Could this really be real? Then I looked at the channel—it wasn't Cleveland, it was Erie, Pennsylvania. I knew we

didn't get the Erie stations, but maybe, just maybe, something could be worked out. Every now and then some far away stations crackled through—once, through considerable static, our set had connected with a station in Detroit. So it was possible. I had a whole week before the Saturday, 11PM broadcast to make it work. I did everything I could to maximize our chances. I got a long length of television antenna cable and fashioned a kind of supplementary dish out of coat hangers and window screens. I hung it out of my upstairs bedroom window, pointed skyward, vaguely in the direction of faraway Erie. Like the kites in *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, I tried to pull the life force of a great monster from out of the skies.

But my contraption failed to capture *DRACULA*. Crushed and defeated, I observed the time of the broadcast by rereading the old copy of *Famous Monsters*, and sorting the considerable collection of *DRACULA* stills I had amassed by mail order from Movie Star News in New York City. It was my only consolation. Why did I have to be born in Ohio? What had I done to deserve such punishment?

One day, in 1968, my mother looked up from her newspaper and announced, "Well, David, I guess you're finally going to see *DRACULA*."

Was I dreaming?

She showed me the entertainment section of the *Plain Dealer*. There was a long strip ad with sprocket holes like a strip of film, running from the top to the bottom of the page. The Old Mayfield Theater on the east side of Cleveland was inaugurating a new program of screening revivals—first, the ad announced, there would be sparkling new 35MM prints of W.C. Fields and Mae West comedies, and then, right there in

the middle of the ad—"One Week Only—Bela Lugosi in *DRACULA*—Boris Karloff in *FRANKENSTEIN*."

The originals!

I spent the next several weeks in a state of indescribably tense nervous excitement . . . which dissipated considerably when the film began. I don't know what I expected from *DRACULA*, but I certainly didn't expect it to be a slow, stagy movie that got slower and stagier as it went on. Could this be all there was? It was extremely disorienting. Lugosi didn't have much dialogue; mostly he just stared . . . there was this stupid bit with an armadillo . . . you never found out exactly what Renfield did with the maid . . . there wasn't any music. And so on.

But the opening two reels of the film riveted me, for reasons I was not ready to fully admit or explore. I went back to the Old Mayfield on Saturday and sat through *DRACULA* and *FRANKENSTEIN* twice. A few months later, the films showed up downtown at the Hippodrome (where *DRACULA* had its Cleveland premiere in 1931). I went again, and stayed all day. I wanted to see that opening part of *DRACULA* again and again, even if I had to sit through the slow parts, along with *FRANKENSTEIN* (a film I found far less interesting).

What grabbed me was the strange, stylized encounter that opened the movie:



a highly affected, middle-aged man with pancake and painted lips invites a young man to his castle, stares at him intently, plies him with a combination of alcohol and drugs, tells the women to go away, and gets the guy unconscious on the floor and crawls on top of him for the fadeout.

Monster movies have always provided people, especially kids, a way to think about sex without having to think about it too directly. For a large part of my adolescence, *DRACULA* and other horror movies gave me a way to simultaneously engage and avoid scary sexual issues—homosexuality in particular. When I was downtown at the library, digging into *DRACULA*, I always noticed that there was someone in the last men's room stalls who never left or moved or made any kind of sound that would indicate he was actually

A Child's (Torture) Garden of Vampires

Page 34. Bela Lugosi in DRACULA (1931).

Page 35. John Carradine in HOUSE OF DRACULA (1945).

Page 36. Bela Lugosi in ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN (1948) and Louis Jourdan in COUNT DRACULA (1978).

Page 37. Jeremy Brett on the San Francisco stage in DRACULA (1978) and Christopher Lee in DRACULA—PRINCE OF DARKNESS (1966).

Page 38. Lon Chaney in LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT (1927) and John Amplas in MARTIN (1978).

Page 39. Lon Chaney Jr. and Louise Allbritton in SON OF DRACULA (1943).

Page 40. David Pittenger, Patricia Felkel, Melissa Taylor, and Jeanette Hanley in the American Repertory Ballet's DRACULA (1993).

using the facilities, at least not in the ordinary fashion. You could go back three hours later and he would still be there, waiting with the patience of the dead. Now, of course, I realize that the guy trolling the toilet was, in a sense, Dracula, the Big Sucking Sound of my adolescent nightmares.

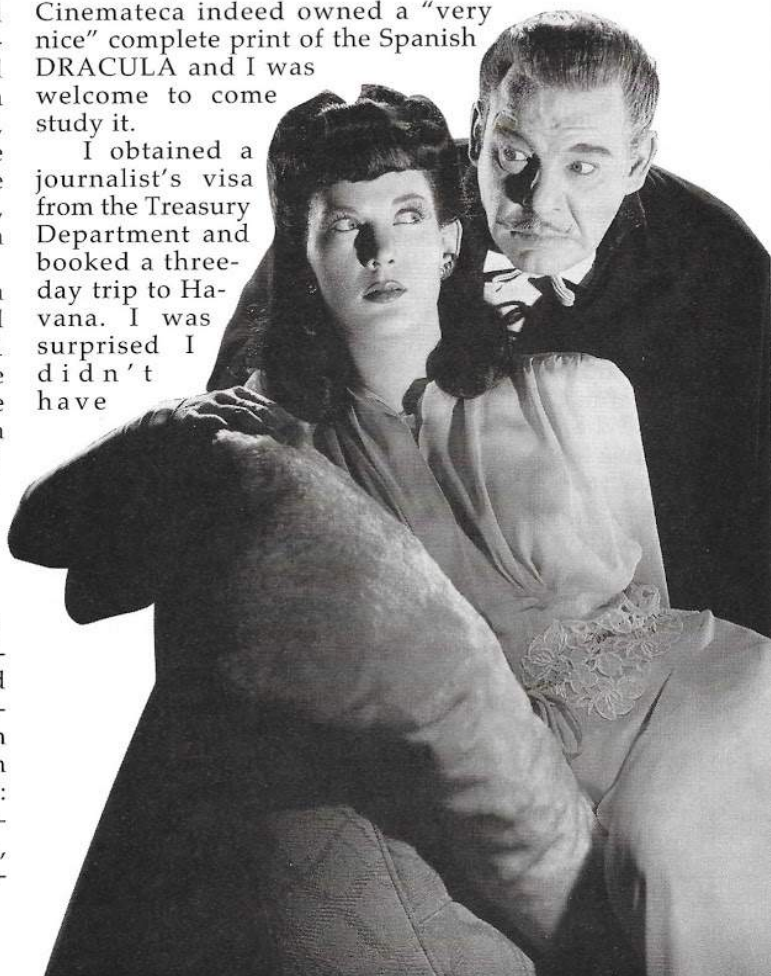
Monsters took a back seat to college and career in the 1970s, but in the late 1980s, the Count began scratching at my window once again. I was living and working in Greenwich Village, and it took me quite a long time to realize that the energy fueling the vampire's reappearance in my life wasn't the H-bomb, but the explosion of the AIDS epidemic which was creating devastation all around me. The fearful interplay of DRACULA, blood-borne plagues, and gay issues had reawakened with a psychic vengeance. I had my parents send me the box of monster magazines and DRACULA photos which had rested undisturbed in my bedroom closet for years. It didn't occur to me that, in writing a proposal for what would eventually be *Hollywood Gothic*, I was actually "bargaining" with the Count and all the body-fluid horror he represented, trying to control and contain and explain him between the sturdy covers of a book.

In 1989, W.W. Norton and Company offered me a contract for *Dracula: The Book of the Film*, which would have been a lavishly-illustrated edition of the 1931 screenplay, as well as a complete documentation of the little-known but technically superior Spanish-language version which had been filmed on the same sets with a different cast and crew. The incomplete negative was on deposit at the Library of Congress. I had studied the work print, and was convinced that my book might spur a full restoration of the film. (The only source for the missing material was said to be in Cuba.) Unfortunately, even with the backing of the American Film Institute, I was unable to obtain rights to the screenplay from Universal, and had to completely revamp the book proposal as a project that did not require studio licensing. I quickly became immersed in documenting the stories of all the people in Dracula's long history who had become obsessed in one way or another with the character and the story: Bram Stoker, his wife Florence and her amazing campaign to destroy the plagiarized film adaptation, NOSFERATU; producers Hamilton Deane and Hor-

ace Liveright, and, of course, Bela Lugosi. Needless to say, my own obsession rivaled almost any chronicled in the book.

In 1989, in a moment of supreme irony, I found myself in Havana, the focal point of all the cold war jitters that got me interested in Dracula in the first place. I had been exchanging telexes for several months with Hector Garcia Mesa, the director of the Cinemateca de Cuba. (I don't know to what extent American communication with Cuba are screened or snooped on, but I've always wondered whether my correspondence was surveilled by intelligence busybodies wondering what all the references to "Dracula" were really about.) Garcia Mesa confirmed that the Cinemateca indeed owned a "very nice" complete print of the Spanish DRACULA and I was welcome to come study it.

I obtained a journalist's visa from the Treasury Department and booked a three-day trip to Havana. I was surprised I didn't have





to fly through an intermediary foreign country; Continental Airlines conveniently had regularly scheduled flights out of Miami, but didn't advertise the fact. The flights left in the middle of the night, packed mostly with Cuban Americans with relatives on the island, who have special travel privileges most of us don't know about.

Cuba, of course, had been linked in my mind to the terror of personal annihilation at a very early age, so somehow it wasn't all that surprising when we were herded off the plane into shuttle buses by soldiers with machine guns. The "Revolution or Death" billboards along the road to the airport were a little startling, too. But I soon found that the Cubans were extremely friendly and accommodating. Was this really the country whose bad behavior in 1962 had sent me running to the arms of Dracula?

When I arrived at the Cinemateca the next day, Garcia Mesa wasn't there and nobody knew who I was or what I was doing. I had a moment of complete panic. Fortunately, there was one staff member fluent in English who was able to save the trip. The print of DRACULA was still at the repertory theater where it had just had a public screening, and it would take a day to get the Count in his canister and back to his archival resting place.

Could I come back tomorrow?

I killed time wandering around Old Havana, much of which seemed like an overheated vision out of J.G. Ballard: once-beautiful mansions and Art Deco houses in the style of Miami Beach, their grounds overgrown with foliage and their outer walls sun-blistered with peeling paint. I had my date with DRACULA the following morning, via an ancient Movieola that pro-

jected the missing third reel of the Spanish Dracula film on a battered index card clipped above the machine. I cringed when the technician repeatedly let yards of film unspool all over the floor—this was, after all, the only copy of this particular footage anywhere in the universe; the original negative had crumbled into dust, and, unlike Dracula himself, couldn't be reconstituted for an on-screen encore. Later, they projected the reel over and over for me in a screening room, where I stood in the middle of the seats with a camera and tripod, snapping the images I would use in my book.

I expected to be rewarded handsomely for my efforts on behalf of Dracula, but in the end, unlike Renfield, I wasn't even offered bugs. Despite a lot of publicity and some lavish reviews, I didn't profit a nickel on the American edition of *Hollywood Gothic*. All the advance money, and more, got poured back into research and out-of-pocket expenses. Universal finally got hold of the Cuban reel and restored the Spanish film, which ended up on *Billboard's* Top 40 video list for eight weeks in 1992. It would have been nice if the studio had acknowledged in some way my efforts to spur the restoration, but it didn't. (Instead, the press kit from MCA Home Video simply used verbatim, unattributed chunks of text from *Hollywood Gothic*, and shot their publicity photos from the printed book.)

I've been a largely unpaid flack for Dracula ever since. I've lost any real desire to be a vampire. (I've appeared on far too many talk shows with real-life blood drinkers to be susceptible any longer to that

Continued on page 78

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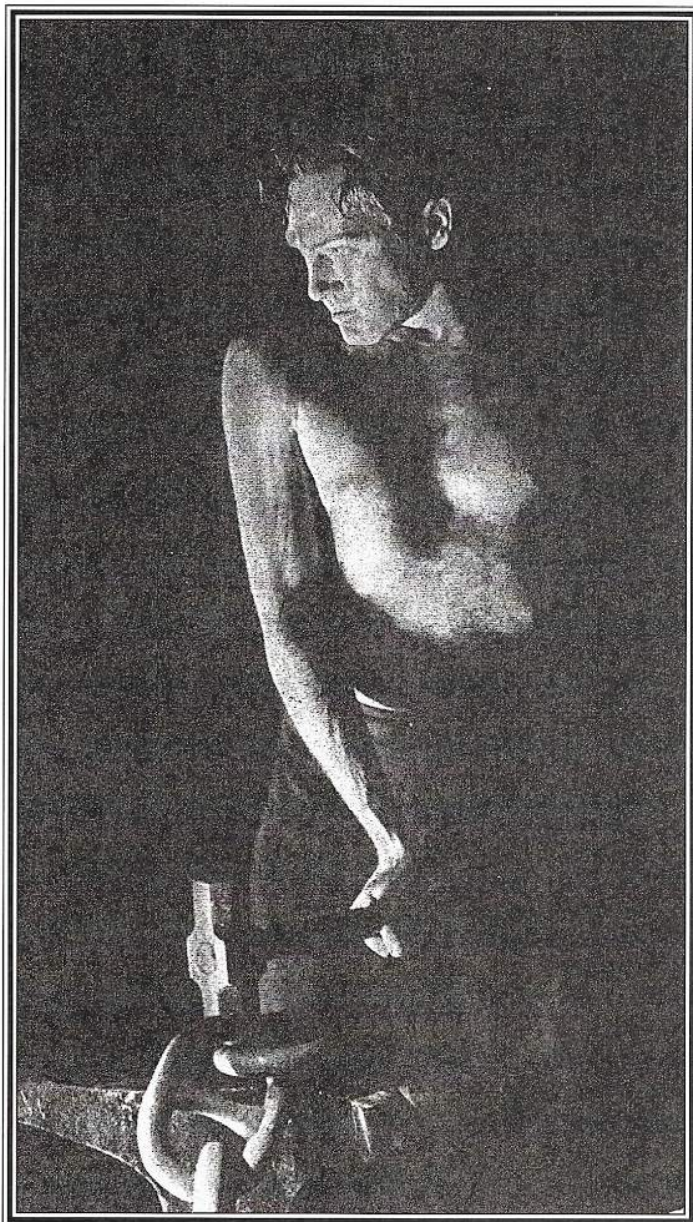
To the Manners Born

David Manners

interviewed by Rick McKay

When *Scarlet Street* publisher Richard Valley asked me to find and interview David Manners while I was in California, I didn't know where to begin. My first thought, not unlike most movie fan's, was "He's still alive?" Luckily for us, *Hollywood Gothic* author David J. Skal had interviewed him some years before and sent me in the right direction. I made some calls and, sure enough, I found him, 97 years old, ensconced in a private facility two hours out of Los Angeles.

David Manners (real name: Rauff de Ryther Daun Acklom) was born on April 30 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He first acted in a road company production of *HE WHO GETS SLAPPED*, opposite Zita Johann, who he would later romance in *THE MUMMY* (1932). After playing a number of seasons on Broadway, and spending three years as a private secretary at New York's Durlacher Art Galleries, Manners met future *FRANKENSTEIN* director James Whale at a dinner party. The result: Manners was



cast opposite future Dr. Frankenstein Colin Clive in Whale's *JOURNEY'S END* (1930). Over 30 films followed in David Manners' too brief Hollywood career, including *KISMET* (1930), *THE MIRACLE WOMAN* (1931), *DRACULA* (1931, with Bela Lugosi), *MAN WANTED* (1932), *THE MUMMY* (with Boris Karloff), *THE GREEKS HAD A WORD FOR THEM* (1932), *THE DEATH KISS* (1933, with Lugosi), *ROMAN SCANDALS* (1933), *THE BLACK CAT* (1934, with both Karloff and Lugosi), and *THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD* (1935, with Claude

Rains. He appeared opposite Katharine Hepburn in her screen debut (1932's *A BILL OF DIVORCEMENT*) and again in his own cinematic swan song (1936's *A WOMAN REBELS*). He left Hollywood, opened a ranch, briefly returned to acting in two Broadway plays in the 1940s, wrote books . . .

I did my homework, but kept running into a brick wall. Why in the world did David Manners, groomed to be the biggest of leading men, leave Hollywood after five short years? He appeared in *DRACULA*, *THE MUMMY*, and *THE BLACK CAT*. He starred opposite Karloff, Lugosi, Rains, Cagney, Stanwyck, Hepburn, and Loretta Young. He is still pursued by the most esteemed horror film historians, who realize he is the last person alive with such firsthand knowledge.

As I drove past Malibu that first morning, anxious to meet Mr. Manners, I was not quite sure what to expect. Would he be tall and elegant, dressed in a cardigan and ascot, with a cane for effect? I half expected him to be wearing a pith helmet and his *MUMMY* desert khakis, or the tuxedo that seemed to follow him from film to film. What I did not expect, of course, was the reality.

David Manners is very much 97 years old. As I entered his room that morning on a hot August day, Mr. Manners was still in bed. He spends a lot of time there. He can no longer walk and is confined to a wheel chair. His voice was almost inaudible and he seemed incredibly weary. I offered to go, but he said to stay—but warned me he had nothing to say and was going back to sleep. I decided to stay. I am very glad I did . . .

David Manners: I hope you find something interesting on me. It's not very interesting these days.

Scarlet Street: You have an amazing history, though.

DM: It's quite a history. Ninety-seven years!

SS: You look great. Still a very handsome man. Can you tell us what started you in the business?

DM: Theater. A play that George Cukor directed. I forget the play, but he is the one responsible for my being called to Hollywood.

SS: Did you enjoy Hollywood?

DM: Not very much. No, my family and all my connections were back

east. I loved New York. Theater, theater is the word . . .

SS: You were the toast of Broadway in *LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN*. They still have a poster up in the library!

DM: No! In *LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN*? Well, the things you don't know!

SS: So you really loved the theater?

DM: Yes, much more so than that old movie town. I didn't like movies. You see, in a play you become the play, because you start in the beginning and end up at the end of the script. Movies, you do little bits and you don't know where it fits in. You just do a little bit here and a little bit there and you never see the whole thing, you can never act out the whole thing. It has no unity. I would advise anybody—a kid—instead of doing pictures, get experience! Do theater! Get theater in his blood!

SS: And then go to Hollywood?

DM: Yes, but I did a lot of theater before that. Hollywood wasn't until the late '20s.

SS: In Hollywood, you appeared in *A BILL OF DIVORCEMENT* for George Cukor. Your costar in that film was Katharine Hepburn.

DM: Yes. I was in her first movie. Yes, that's right. I remember her first appearance in the movie, where a door was opened and she came down some steps right into my arms. That was Hepburn's entrance into movies.

SS: Who could ask for a better entrance than to come downstairs and into your arms?

DM: (Laughs) Well, she got it!

SS: It must have been good luck for her.

DM: I hope!

SS: Did you enjoy working with Hepburn?

DM: Why not? She's a lovely lady. Very direct. Very positive.

SS: You're a very positive person, too. It shows in your writing.

DM: Which one?

SS: The title that comes to mind is *The Dreamer Awakes From the Dream*.

DM: Well, they renamed a lot of those books and that makes it difficult. I loved writing. I still do. But . . . can't write now . . . (Sighs)

SS: What did you think when you first came to Hollywood?

DM: It was a change. I liked California. Not Hollywood, but California was something different.

SS: What was Hollywood like back in those days?

DM: A little village.

SS: Was it difficult to leave Broadway, though?

DM: No, never. It was never difficult to leave anything.

SS: That's a good philosophy. You must be a philosopher, Mr. Manners.

DM: (Laughs) I think you're right. Because I don't think I would have gotten through without it.

SS: How did you find your philosophy in life?

DM: Living.

SS: But you found it young. Most people couldn't have done what you did. You left Hollywood very young. That was brave.

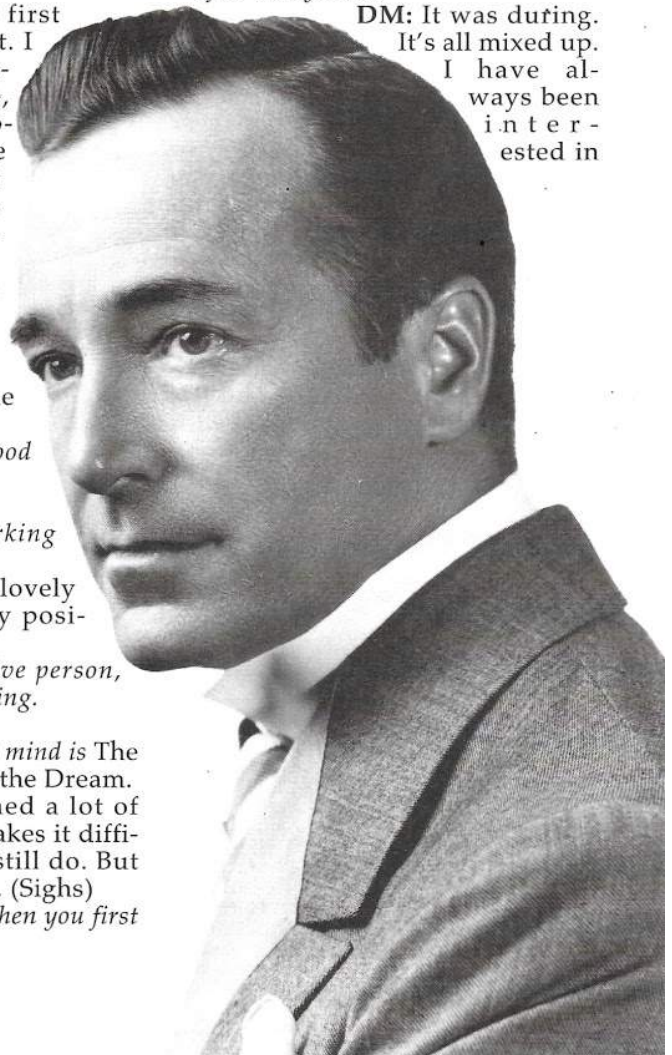
DM: You have to want it very badly. You ask for it and you work for it. I tried to get into a monastery once, and they told me that I was not cut out for it. That I should go elsewhere and look for my life.

SS: How old were you, then?

DM: Oh, in my 30s.

SS: So you tried to enter a monastery after Hollywood?

DM: It was during. It's all mixed up. I have always been interested in





that angle. I suppose you could say I was—oh, I don't know—a searching man. I was a seeker. Seeking for the meaning of everything.

SS: Are you still seeking?

DM: Who isn't? Who can say, "I've found it?"

SS: Nobody.

DM: Right!

SS: But, you helped people with your books . . . helped them to keep looking.

DM: I hope so. I hope your thinking is right.

SS: They inspired people. And people still watch your movies every day. You worked with so many interesting people . . . Loretta Young, for instance.

DM: That's amazing. She never really liked me, I don't think.

SS: Did you like her?

DM: I wish you wouldn't ask me that. Don't ask me those difficult questions that involve "like or dislike." It's no good liking or disliking anything.

SS: But didn't you like Helen Chandler, your costar in DRACULA?

DM: Helen Chandler? Good heavens, yes! She died young. Did I like

her? Yes, I did. Yes, she was a beautiful person. But she was sad. I had a feeling she would never grow old, never even grow up . . .

SS: In fact, she died when she was still fairly young. Who did you learn the most from in Hollywood?

DM: Oh, what a silly question!

SS: Or did you learn more in New York?

DM: I—don't—know!

SS: Well, you know an awful lot.

DM: Enough to know to keep my mouth shut! (Laughs)

SS: Good answer! So, are you happy these days? Are they taking good care of you?

DM: Oh, it's all right. I am not this way always. Usually I'm . . . well, at 97 it's very difficult to answer questions like these. I'm afraid I am not a question-answering machine.

SS: You're a question-asker.

DM: I am not an asker. I'm a seeker, searching. I have always just let it be and I've been drawn or dragged to the right place without any doing on my part. I have always been taken care of.

SS: Would you say your experience with George Cukor was an example of that? He helped your career.

DM: Oh, George—yes! I knew George when he was just an assistant director in the theater. Somehow, believe it or not, he was just an assistant. He said, "David, you will go far." And I said "Yes, that's true!" (Laughs) I said, "I hope you have something to do with it." And he said, "Are you busy on Saturday?" "Well," I said, "yes, I am," and George said, "That's too bad, because I could put you in a play." So I said, "Oh! Well, then I'm not busy." (Laughs)

SS: And he put you in a play.

DM: And he was my introduction to pictures.

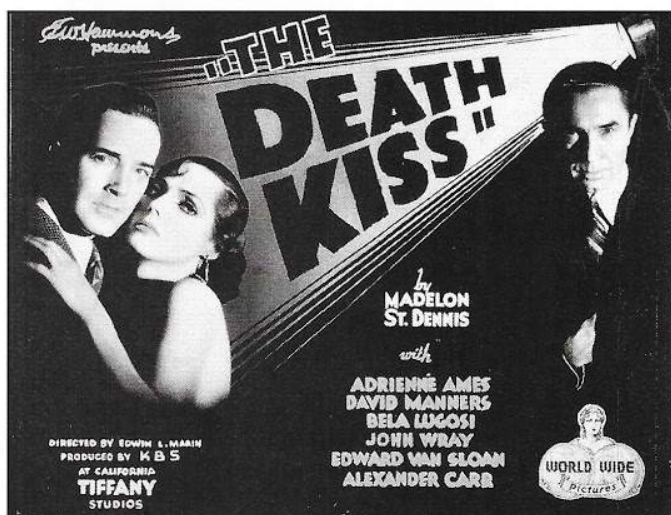
SS: You still have a lot of fans, you know. They're very interested in learning about your life.

DM: Well, you got here just in time for mine. I'm just about finished with it.

SS: Finished with life?

DM: Yes. I wish to sleep.

SS: A lot of people love you.



DM: Oh? How do you know that?
SS: A lot of people want to hear your opinions. Do you have any advice for anyone starting out?

DM: No! Heavens, no! I think, to be what you are, don't take advice from other people. Find your advice in your heart. Yes, find your advice in your heart. It's yours and you keep it. And if you think it's helpful to other people . . . then share it. I think the things we share are very important.

SS: Like your writing.

DM: How kind of you.

SS: Although people know your film work better.

DM: I am past the "like and dislike" stage. It's no use, all that emotional stuff . . .

SS: Were you an emotional person when you were younger?

DM: I would say yes. Always.

SS: Passionate?

DM: I don't know . . .

SS: You're tired. Would you like me to come back another day?

DM: What day? I can't make any plans—I may be dead. Let's not make plans.

SS: Do you have many visitors?

DM: No, I don't. I don't like having visitors.

SS: But you don't mind if I . . . ?

DM: Oh, sure! Come on! But, I have nothing to tell you that you don't already know.

SS: Well, even so . . .

DM: I am sorry to be so stupid today.

SS: You're not stupid at all.

DM: Well, I *feel* stupid.

SS: No, that's silly. You sound very intelligent to me.

DM: (Laughs) I wonder who you're living with!

SS: I live by myself.

DM: I think that's a good idea. I think you find more out that way. I lived by myself a lot of the time. I learned more that way, because when you're trying to please someone else all the time you are always looking in the wrong direction.

SS: That's a good point.

DM: Not very sharp, though.

SS: Not very sharp?

DM: No, not very sharp.

SS: Well, shall I let you get back to your nap?

DM: Thank you awfully.

SS: I'll come back this weekend.

DM: And if you have anything for me to say to the people who read you, just say that I give my love to everybody. That is the most impor-

tant thing, for us to love each other and be kind to each other. Amen.

SS: How long did it take to learn that?

DM: Oh, about 90 years. (Laughs)

SS: Is there anything I can bring you?

DM: No. I am tired out. I have no words. I am out of talk.

SS: You're out of talk?

DM: I'm not very interesting. I am just an old wreck.



ABOVE: David Manners starred opposite Eddie Cantor and Gloria Stuart in Samuel Goldwyn's *ROMAN SCANDALS* (1933). **PREVIOUS PAGE:** Lobby cards from Manners' horror films with Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi.

SS: You're not an old wreck. I'll see you again this weekend, if you don't mind the company.

DM: Oh, I don't mind the company at all—if *you* can stand it.

SS: It's been a pleasure to meet you.

DM: Then come back . . . and we will fly . . .

And with that I left David Manners to his hard-earned nap.

I stopped at the nursing home director's office on my way out to say hello, and when I left 20 minutes later I got yet another shock. There was the "fast-fading" Mr. Manners whizzing down the hall, fully dressed and self-propelled, in his wheel chair. He looked embarrassed when I caught his eye and said, "Well, someone is feeling better!" He gave me half of a guilty smile and disappeared. I was at first hurt, feeling I had been duped, then fascinated, and finally delighted as I realized he was still acting—and possibly better than ever.

As I headed down the Pacific Coast Highway in my rental car, I could not stop thinking of David Manners. I tried to reconcile the ancient gentleman in the room—alone in bed—with the tall, blonde, blue-eyed young star of all of those Hollywood films. I saw him opposite Barbara Stanwyck in Frank Capra's *THE MIRACLE WOMAN* and holding Katharine Hepburn in his arms in *A BILL OF DIVORCEMENT*. I wondered how he could have spent five years in Hollywood and turned his back on \$150,000 a year—tax free at the height of the Depression—never to return. It was rumored that an especially acrimonious spat with Joan Crawford was the straw that broke the handsome young actor's Hollywood spirit. I had heard that he went to the Mojave Desert for 30 years. It was almost folklore. He had opened a ranch where the glitterati and intelligentsia alike could escape—in total privacy—from the town that he so much hated himself. Garbo, Einstein, Gable—all were guests there over the years.

I could not get David Manners out of mind the next few days in Los Angeles. As I would drive down Sunset, seeing the young, beautiful wannabes in their convertibles, I would find myself thinking of the 97-year-old man asleep in a hospital bed—still with a lifetime of memories. I had heard he was at his best early in the morning, so a few days later I dragged myself out of my hotel at 6AM and headed up Route One to see him again. I would find the early start was well worth it.

When I arrived, Mr. Manners was still asleep, but he soon woke, looked at me and said, "Well, good



Photograph by Will Walling, Jr.



(Left) On the First National lot. He's under contract to them but other studios are borrowing him right and left. (Above) With his mother. She lives with him in Hollywood.

ARE YOU

By HARRIET PARSONS

YOU'VE been hearing a lot about William Powell's suavity, about Ronald Colman's gentlemanliness (if there is such a word), about Ramon Novarro's charm. Maybe you've heard a whisper or two concerning Clark Gable's terrific appeal for the ladies on both the paying and receiving end of the box office. But there's a lad living quietly in Hollywood who has an edge on all these famous Lotharios of Limelight Land. He has the polish of Powell, the quiet distinction of Colman, and he's as heart-whole and fancy-free as the professional bachelor, Ivan Lebedeff. Maybe he's not as aggressively virile as Gable—but he has that newest nominee for the Valentino crown beaten to the goal post, too. For Clark is married, and David Manners (that's his name) is as unhampered by marital ties as Jackie Cooper.

You've heard about David from time to time and you've admired his handsome face in the fan magazines—ever since he played young Raleigh in "Journey's End," but you haven't yet realized what a serious contender he is for the title of Hollywood's leading Don Juan. You haven't realized it because Dave himself doesn't know it yet. Because, for all his laughing amiability and gracious charm, he's a very serious and thoughtful young man with a great deal on his mind besides feminine conquest.

Tall, slender and perfect of feature, David has a physical beauty that puts most of the screen's current heroes to shame. But—and here is what makes him a true romantic menace—he is not the vapid, empty-headed type of juvenile—far from it. He is a cultured, well-read,

morning! If you will please give me some peace, I can have someone dress me and we can go to breakfast. Now out!" I could see I was getting a much livelier version of David Manners already. I went out in the hall, turned on my laptop, and booted up Microsoft's "Cine-mania" CD-Rom film reference program and did some last minute research on David's films. I had a feeling he might be a little more up to talking today.

I was right. He picked a fight with the woman seated next to him at breakfast and seemed to delight in it. He complained of the food and flirted with the staff. He held court through his institutional

pancakes, prune juice, and protein drink. He was in rare form . . .

SS: *It's a beautiful day today, isn't it?*

DM: Yes. I take it you have been out in it?

SS: *I came from Los Angeles.*

DM: Good God, really? How do you manage it?

SS: *I just jump in the car.*

DM: And the car runs by itself, I suppose?

SS: *Well, no, it doesn't. Do you want me to cut that pancake for you?*

DM: No, I just want to turn it over and get it juiced on both sides. What do you mean? Cut it for me? I will cut your hand off!

SS: *You're in a feisty mood today.*

DM: Feisty? (Picks up grapefruit wedge from plate) Just the right shape for your mouth!

SS: *Did you get a good night's sleep?*

DM: As far as I know. I don't know whether it was bad or good. If I could tell you, then it would have been bad.

SS: *Well, you're having a good breakfast. Do you know who I'm having breakfast with tomorrow? Fay Wray.*

DM: No! Give her a little piece of my heart, would you? Fay Wray! I'll be damned! I don't remember many, but I remember Fay.

SS: *Fay wrote a play and it opened this past week.*

DM: No kidding? Oh, that's wonderful! My God, that's wonderful! I wrote one in my 40s, but it never saw the light of day. I don't even have a copy of it.

SS: *Someone must have it, somewhere.*

DM: (Sings) "Somewhere, over the rainbow . . ."

SS: *Nice singing. Do you like music?*

DM: Oh, I was born into music. My mother was a fabulous piano player. All the classics.

SS: *You even made a movie musical. ROMAN SCANDALS, with Eddie Cantor and Gloria Stuart . . .*

DM: That was the picture that I climbed a wall and looked over into a garden? I remember that. Yeah, was Gloria in the garden? I remember now. It was wonderful. (Gesturing to pancake) Whoa, this is tough! Bring me a hammer and chisel!

SS: *Let's talk about your dude ranch in the Mojave desert. What was it called?*

DM: Yucca Loma.

SS: *Beautiful name. You were there quite a long time.*

DM: About 30 years. I built a little house there, out of adobe. I had three boys from New Mexico who were good workers. They said, "We will build you a house. We made bricks right there from the dirt and put them on racks to dry, and it was months before they were dry enough to be used. They sat there in rain and storms until they were proofed. Waterproofed. Finally, all the houses there were made of adobe. Adobe was the best. Especially for the chimneys."

SS: *Is your house still there?*

DM: The woman who bought the property had them all pulled down. It was a beautiful place. The private houses were far, far apart and nobody interfered with anybody else. We served meals three times a day in the main house. We had a beauti-

ful tennis court and a swimming pool. Changed the water once a week and watered the trees around the tennis court with the water.

SS: *Everybody said that it was the place to go when you wanted peace.*

DM: It's gone. All gone. It's ticky-tack houses there, now, for all I know, but it was a remarkable place. The only approach—the only road was over a hill and down a little path and up again, and suddenly you'd see that there was nothing for 80 miles in any direction but Joshua trees and cactus, lots of cactus.

SS: *Did you have yucca plants?*

DM: Oh, big Yucca trees. You had to be careful with them. They had a habit of dropping these seedlings and there was an irritation in them. If you walked too closely, they would throw the seedlings at you and you couldn't get them out. They were like an arrowhead. You had to go to the doctor to get them out.

SS: *Why did you leave?*

DM: Why? Because my dear friend Katherine and her daughter, Gwen, the ones who joined in making Yucca Loma, were ready to leave. They owned it with me. So, I left and I have never seen it since. Never looked back.

SS: *Do you still have photographs of Yucca Loma?*

DM: No, I am doing the opposite. I'm getting rid of things. I'm not a collector anymore. I am out of gas.

SS: *How do you feel?*

DM: Out of gas!

SS: *Do you want something to drink?*

DM: No, I can't bear that stuff. (Sips drink) It's awful! So sweet!

SS: *Didn't you promise to drink it?*

DM: Promise nothing—and then you'll never lie. (Laughs)

SS: *Is that your motto?*

DM: I don't know. I just made it up! (Laughs)

SS: *Did you write all the time when you were at Yucca Loma?*

DM: No, only when I wanted to. I wrote three novels when I was there. The novels were something I always wanted to do instead of movies. So, I just did it. When I left pictures, I didn't want to have to do anything I didn't want to.

SS: *How did you find Yucca Loma?*

DM: A very kind friend drove me up there one evening. They had arrangements for people, like a hotel or motel. The next morning I was introduced to Katherine Boynton. I asked her, "Could I build a little



Right now, David is somewhat scared of the idea of another marriage. The unhappiness brought him by his first venture has made him decidedly wary about girls and matrimony.



With Madge Evans and Ina Claire in "The Greeks Had a Word for It." David was borrowed by United Artists from First National for the romantic lead in this important picture.

MANNERS-CONSCIOUS?

sensitive young person with a leavening of humor. A well-groomed, well-bred, well-mannered young man you'd be proud to be seen with—yet anything but a tailor's dummy or a good-looking gigolo. Possessed of brains, intelligent and stimulating. Something of a phenomenon in Hollywood, this Manners lad.

THE fact that he is not known and publicized as one of Hollywood's foremost sheiks is something of a mystery at first glance. Oh, Dave steps out occasionally. He's been seen with Evalyn Knapp, Sylvia Sidney, Rose Hobart—numerous other lovely and prominent young ladies. But never often enough with any one particular girl to encourage even a shadow of a rumor. What's the matter with the boy that he doesn't do his duty by the chatter writers?

I'll tell you what the matter is. David Manners has been hurt. And he has no intention of being hurt again if he can help it. He's taken the count in the not-so-distant past. He's still bruised—and he's wary. He knows what it feels like to have a great romance shattered—to watch a great love turn to ashes. And he'll think twice before he gives his love, his dreams and his peace of mind into a woman's hands a second time.

When David came to Hollywood two years ago, he brought a wife with him. His marriage lasted just six months after his screen debut in "Journey's End." He is now divorced and his wife has remarried. Yet few people in Hollywood know that the personable Mr. Manners has ever been married.

People thought David snooty during those first months in pictures. His natural reserve was intensified by the bitter unhappiness through which he was passing. He was distracted, harassed—his mind constantly on the problems

. . . If not, you ought to be, for David Manners has as much talent, suavity and charm as almost any three actors combined

which awaited him at home. When acquaintances addressed him, more often than not he didn't hear. When fellow workers joked with him he could not joke back. There was no gaiety in him. He was worn out with worry, distracted by the continual effort to save a marriage which had been doomed from the start. The consensus of opinion was that David Manners was either a very dull young man or a very high-bat one. Those early acquaintances marvel at the change in him when they meet him now.

The tragedy of David Manners' marriage was the tragedy of family interference. Had David and his wife been left to work out their problems alone they would probably still be happily married. But shortly after they settled in Hollywood, during those first difficult months when David was gaining a foothold in pictures, Mrs. Manners' mother came to live with them. David will still tell you that his wife was the one woman for him—that she was ideally suited to him. But she was completely dominated by her mother. And when the Manners marriage, instead of being a happy partnership between two lovers, became a three-cornered affair with mother at the helm, its death warrant was (Continued on page 127)

89

house here on your desert?" She said, "I'm in the habit of saying no. Come back next Sunday and I'll tell you." I had to wait a whole week. I didn't have a car in those days, so I got someone with a car and we drove up—and Katherine was in Los Angeles. So I came all the way back, and she said, "Have it drawn up exactly as it's going to look and I'll tell you if you can build or not." And that's the way it was.

SS: *You fell in love with it right away?*

DM: Absolutely.

SS: *Did you think you'd spend 30 years there?*

DM: No, but it was back and forth. Some of it was back in New York City, some of it in Hollywood . . .

that sort of thing. Sorry, I am all pancake. I was told by a doctor never to eat and talk at the same time. So much for doctors. I'm tired, though. I'll have to go back to bed.

SS: *I'm going home to New York tomorrow. This is my last chance to visit with you.*

DM: Well, you may take a tiny little piece of my heart back.

SS: *Now that's something I'll treasure.*

DM: That's kind, very kind. Did you manufacture it in your little book of kind things to say to old withering stars?

DM: No, I meant it. I want to show you my laptop computer before I leave, though. It brings up pictures of movie



LEFT: Edward Van Sloan, David Manners, and Helen Chandler greet Bela Lugosi in *DRACULA* (1931). Chandler was Manners' favorite leading lady. **RIGHT:** Van Sloan again, with Zita Johann, Manners, and Boris Karloff in *THE MUMMY* (1932).

stars on the screen. Here's a photograph of you.

DM: Well, I never saw such a thing! It's a computer? How marvelous! I must say, though, that I think I'm glad we didn't have such things!

SS: Here's someone you knew . . .

DM: Oh, my God—it's Beulah Bondi! She came to Yucca Loma all the time. God, I loved her. She would tell the most wicked stories about everyone—and at dinner, no less! She was subtle, but wicked.

SS: Here's Clark Gable.

DM: Oh, yes, of course. He came to Yucca Loma, too. No, I didn't like him. Who else is in there?

SS: Claude Rains.

DM: Claude Rains? Oh, nice man. Very honest. We did that *MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD* movie together.

SS: Based on Charles Dickens' unfinished novel. Tell me, do you think Dickens would have written the ending that way?

DM: Dickens would never have published it at all! It was not good enough. It was not a finished novel, and it was not a good movie at all.

SS: Here's someone you've been asked about more than once.

DM: Who is that? Oh, God—it's what's-his-name! Yes, Karloff. Very grand, but so withdrawn. But he was always polite. A gentleman.

SS: And after Boris Karloff comes Bela Lugosi, of course.

DM: Oh, I never did get to know him—not really. He was not someone I cared to know. Not really.

SS: And yet you made a number of horror pictures with him, including *DRACULA*, which was directed by Tod Browning. Did you like working with Browning?

DM: Tod Browning? Not much. I never knew him. No, I don't know anything about him.

SS: But he directed *DRACULA*, right?

DM: Well, if you say so. He was never on the set. It was the cameraman who was there.

SS: Karl Freund? Didn't you have a good relationship with Tod Browning?

DM: I had no relationship! He was never there. Okay, let's get out of here. I don't want to hold them up any longer.

SS: Do you want to go back to your room?

DM: I will go to anybody's room! Let's visit the gray hairs.

As I wheeled David Manners back to his bedroom, he began to play the grand boulevardier. He waved to the old ladies and called some by name. They looked at him in shock, some as if they had never seen him before. It was clear that this was not his usual behavior. It was also clear that he was enjoying himself immensely. We stopped at a hallway performance by a volunteer guitar player and David shouted out a few bravos and listened as if he were at Her Majesty's Theatre. As I stood behind him, I looked down at the wizened little gentleman in the chair and pictured the debonair, tuxedoed

playboy who protected Zita Johann from Karloff's immortal Imhotep. He was very much still there.

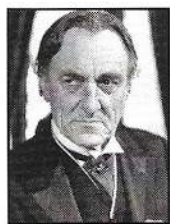
I wondered how many people realized who he was? Very few of the staff knew, or cared that he had once been the next big leading man in Hollywood. And virtually no one realized that he had become a respected spiritual teacher, writer, and philosopher after all those years in the Mojave. He was just another old timer to most of the staff. I found it unsettling to hear a nurses' aide yell, "Hey, Amigo" as they came in to change him in the morning. But, he didn't mind. It had, after all, been nothing more than "that old movie town" to him. He evidently had bigger fish to fry. And he seems to have found his peace. Not unlike his memories of Hollywood, he seems now to be waiting for the final fade-out; almost bemused at how little control he seems to have in this last scene, too. The director will have the last word and final edit—while the leading man of films made over 60 years ago waits for his exit cue.

As I wheeled him back into his room, he spied a black cat-shaped vase that held some fast fading flowers . . .

DM: That cat! What is he smelling that thing for?

SS: Well, it looks like he's smelling the flowers.

Continued on page 79



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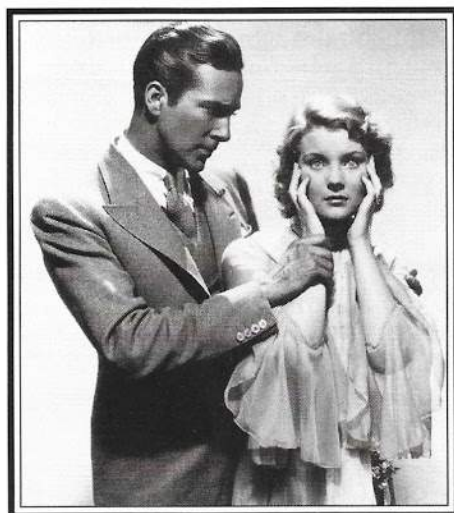
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Our Man on Baker Street

by David Stuart Davies

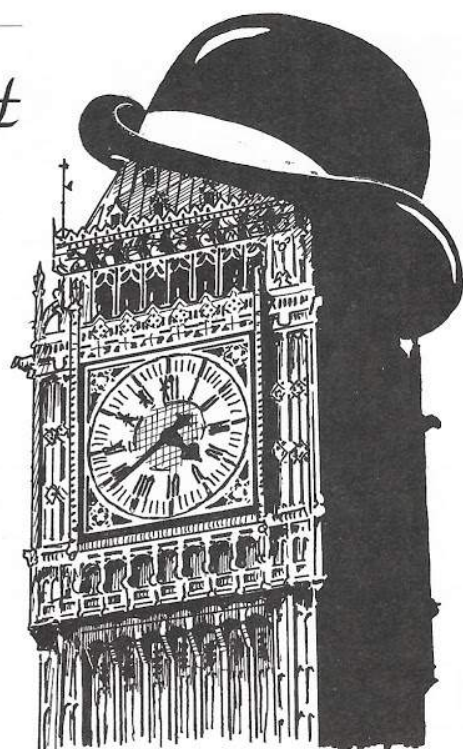
The BBC Radio Drama Department is now a mere cat's whisker away from completing the Sherlock Holmes Canon. Having recorded all of the 56 short stories and recently broadcast the third of the novels, *The Valley of Fear*, they have only *The Hound of the Baskervilles* to go. Let us not underestimate this feat, for nowhere in the world has there been a complete dramatized version of all the Sherlock Holmes stories featuring the same actors. I do not suppose that Clive Merrison, who plays Holmes, and Michael Williams as Watson realized what a momentous decision it was when they accepted the parts for a one-off production of *A Study in Scarlet* in 1989. It was such a success that wheels within wheels began to grind within the BBC, an establishment which is notoriously slow to latch onto a good thing. Eventually it was decided that an attempt to record the whole Canon should be made.

It was agreed that the stories should be recorded in order of pub-

lication so that the listening audience would receive them in the same order as the readers of *The Strand Magazine* did over a hundred years ago. This approach avoided having to deal with the various Canonical chronologies that have been penned over the years, which attempt to fix each case in real time. However, this way of doing things gave the actors and writers extra headaches. Where Merrison and Williams were concerned, they were not allowed to age gradually with the series, but had to play different ages in different shows. For example, "His Last Bow" is set in 1914, with the Baker Street companions aged about 60 and having to sound so, while the previous story, "The Devil's Foot," is set in 1897 when our heroes are in their early 40s. Radio cannot use hair dye and makeup to disguise the real age of an actor. He has to do it vocally. Merrison and Williams turned out to be masters of this magical sleight of voice. The writers were presented with the problem of making

the later stories, some of them terribly weak, as bright and interesting as the earlier ones. Whereas "The Speckled Band" from *The Adventures* (1892) is a fine, chilling, Gothic mystery that demands its full 45 minute running time, "The Veiled Lodger" from *The Case-Book* (1927), which is hardly a Holmes story at all, warrants about 20 minutes airtime only in its original form. This constraint brought out the best in the writers, who found ingenious and satisfying means of elongating these inadequate tales while injecting them with extra interest.

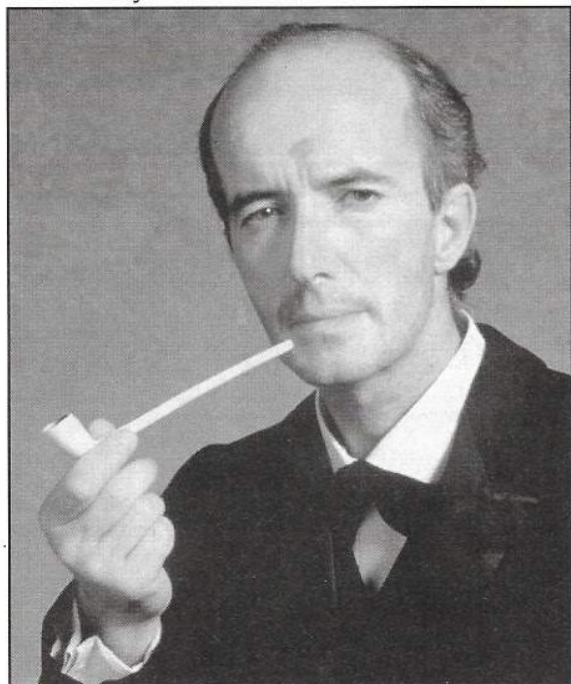
While disappointing a select few die-hard purists who wanted all the dialogue from the original stories to be in-



cluded, plus great chunks of Watsonian narration, the series has been a great success, bringing fresh radio life to these well-worn tales. One pleasing thing about the series is the strong relationship between Holmes and Watson. Without sentimentality, their true friendship is beautifully developed.

The chief writer on the series is Bert Coules (soon to be interviewed in *Scarlet Street*), and it is he who has been most audacious in his handling of the stories. Allow me to give you one example by referring to his version of "The Lion's Mane." This is generally regarded as a weak story—one that Holmes himself recounts in his retirement. It is entirely without Watson. Colin Dexter, creator of Inspector Morse, believed it to be "a strong contender for being adjudged the worst story in the whole of the Sherlock Holmes corpus." Holmes states at the beginning of the story that, although his friend Watson had "passed almost beyond my ken," there was the occasional "weekend visit." Picking up on this inference, Coules wove a clever and fascinating web around the plot of the story and, in doing so, he turned a mediocre tale into something special. In Coules' version, there are only two characters! They are Holmes and Watson, of course! The doctor, on one of his occasional weekend visits to his friend's retirement cottage on the South coast,

Clive Merrison as the World's Greatest Detective in the BBC Radio adaptations of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories.



discusses with Holmes the recent William Gillette theatrical production about Holmes and Watson, which he has seen. The idea of being portrayed on stage appeals to the vain and capricious reasoner. However, he has a game up his sleeve which he wants Watson to play. It is a game of murder—or it is, at least, solving the lion's mane case. Slowly, and in sequence, Holmes reveals the facts and clues pertinent to the investigation while they visit various seaside locations in connection with the tragedy. You may remember that the solution involves death by jellyfish! Picking up the theme of dramatizations introduced by the Gillette conversation, Coules has Holmes "playing" the parts of the characters in the mystery, encouraging his friend to take on the role of detective. The result not only sharpens and clarifies the details of the lion's mane puzzle, but it adds immeasurably to our understanding and delight in the friendship of these two old colleagues. I believe that the piece works magnificently.

It is a common conception that, to produce radio drama, you just get a bunch of actors around a microphone, hand them a script, and start recording. Of course, the whole process is much more complex than that. I visited the radio studio several times during the course of the series and saw for myself what great care is taken in the production of the finished programme. I remember that, during the recording of "The Final Problem," after a long, protracted discussion with the technical crew about which was the most effective and most accurate steam engine effect, Bert Coules showed me 'round the large studio. It contained a series of sound bays, each producing a different acoustic: there was one for the railway station, one for the ledge above the Reichenbach Falls, and one for the Baker Street interior. I was also shown plates containing squashed banana, with knives and forks which were to be used by Morrison and Williams for Holmes and Watson's last meal together. Nearby was a washing-up

liquid bottle. I wondered what effect that was meant to produce. Bert was puzzled, too, and made enquiries. He came back smiling. "It's for washing up the plates after the scene," he said.

Actors have to adopt a special technique when appearing on radio shows. That phrase alone seems bizarre, because no one actually "appears" on radio, but they have to create pictures with their voices. It amused me very much to see Andrew Sachs, Manuel of FAWLTY TOWERS fame, and a small man, building his voice to becoming the imposing King in "A Scandal in Bohemia." It is also amusing to hear the director instruct an actor to "repeat the line with a smile on your face." In all these ways, the world of Sherlock Holmes is allowed to spring to life in our heads.

Now that "The Valley of Fear" is completed, it only remains for "The Hound of the Baskervilles" to be recorded to complete this mammoth and unique project. Let us hope that the BBC does not wait too long.

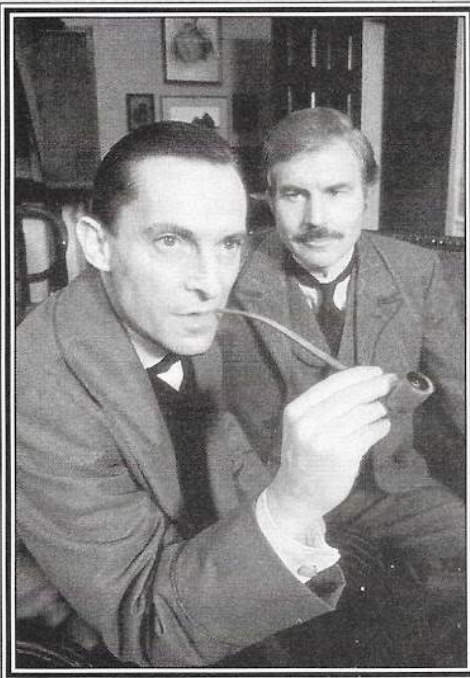


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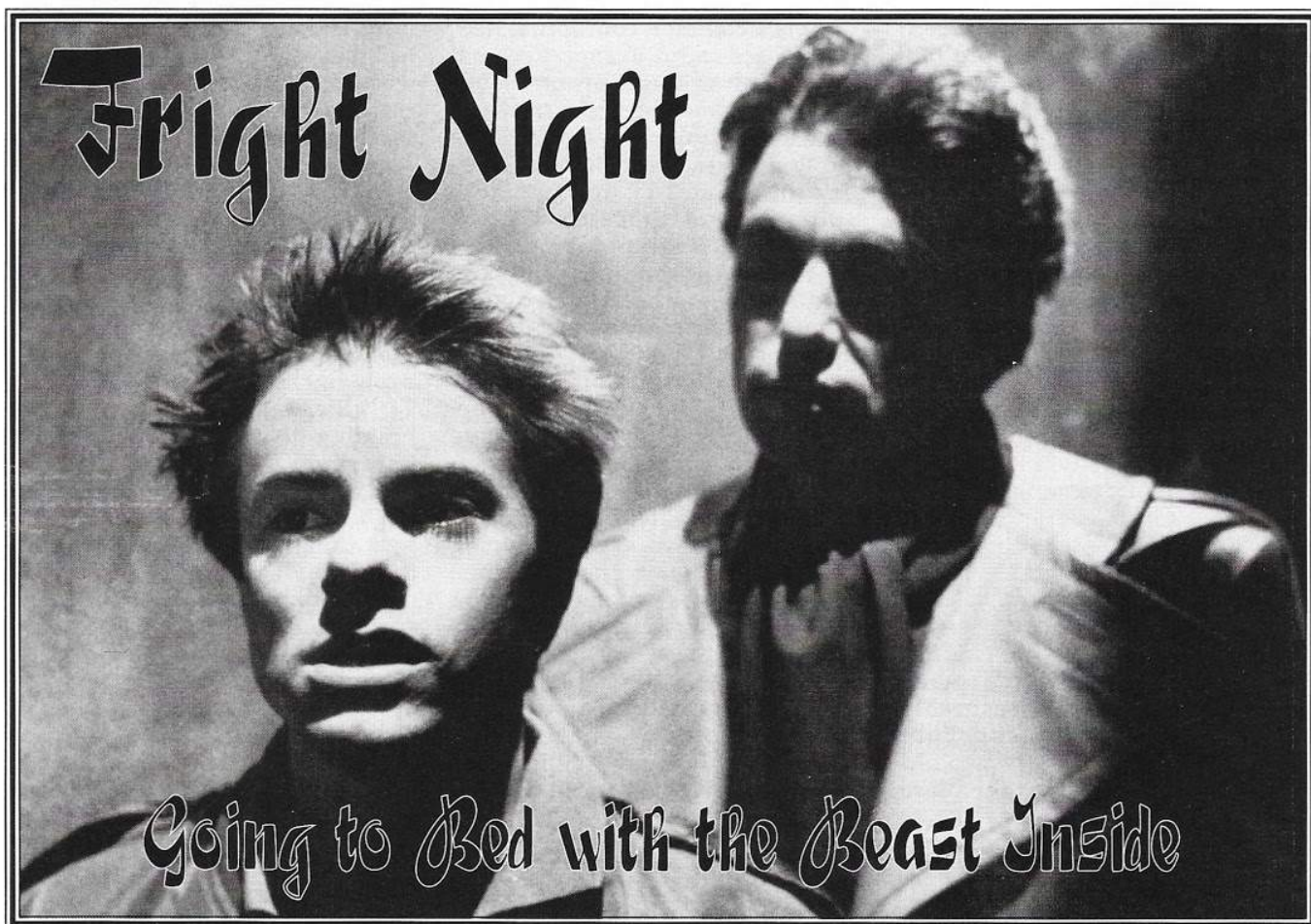
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by Lelia Loban

All horror comedy whistles past the graveyard as it laughs at things people fear. *FRIGHT NIGHT* (1985) also whistles past the bedroom door. Behind that lock, lie rumpled sheets and a dark closet.

Teenaged Charley Brewster (William Ragsdale, who later starred in Fox TV's *HERMAN'S HEAD*) and his girlfriend, Amy Peterson (Amanda Bearse), both virgins, wrestle fully clothed on his bed. She whines "No" while teasing him on. He persists. She slaps. He gets frustrated. But then, unexpectedly, Amy gives in to his advances.

Interesting timing: As Charley shuts off the distraction of a vampire movie on TV, he glances out the window. He sees his new neighbors, Jerry Dandrige (Chris Sarandon) and Billy Cole (Jonathan Stark), move a coffin into the basement of the house next door. Charley swiftly abandons his under-rehearsed sex scene. He chooses a more comfortably familiar scary movie, the vampire chase.

Charley watches Jerry bite women, then dispose of bodies, but the cops call the kid crazy. He enlists help from Amy, punk pal "Evil Ed" Thompson (Stephen Geoffreys), and a local TV personality, Peter Vincent (Roddy McDowall). Peter, his name an affectionate nod to Peter Cushing and Vincent Price, is a former B actor with a late-night TV show, similar to Zacherley's *SHOCK THEATER*. The *FRIGHT NIGHT THEATER* set is the old Monogram studio. *FRIGHT NIGHT*'s many tributes to vintage horror include clips from

THE PREMATURE BURIAL (1962), *SCARS OF DRACULA* (1970), and *OCTAMAN* (1971), and stills from *FRANKENSTEIN* (1931), *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN* (1943), and *HOUSE OF DRACULA* (1945).

Respected photographer and character actor McDowall has made at least eight dozen movies, including *PLANET OF THE APES* (1968) and its many sequels, since his debut as a child star in *SCRUFFY* (1938). Alas, Peter Vincent fares less well, with ratings so low that his show gets canceled. When the manager of his cramped apartment sends him an eviction notice, Peter accepts Amy's \$500 savings bond as payment for helping her humor Charley until he gets over his "delusion."

But then Peter notices that one of his souvenirs, a movie prop mirror, doesn't show Jerry's reflection! Chris Sarandon, as handsome Jerry, gives good sleaze in over-the-top comic scoundrel roles such as this one. (He turned in another excellent performance as the chickenhearted villain of 1987's *THE PRINCESS BRIDE*.)

Tom Holland made his debut as a director and wrote the screenplay for *FRIGHT NIGHT*. (He wasn't involved with the less successful *FRIGHT NIGHT II*, released on video first and then in theaters, in 1988. McDowall and Ragsdale returned, though the plot didn't pick up where *FRIGHT NIGHT* left off.) Holland's previous scripts included *THE BEAST WITHIN* (1982), *PSYCHO II* (1983), *CLOAK AND DAGGER* (1984), and *SCREAM FOR HELP* (1984).

FRIGHT NIGHT did well at the box office. Most critics agreed with Janet Maslin of *The New York Times* (August 2, 1985) when she called Holland "a new-comer with promise." Reviewers generally commended the solid acting and Richard Edlund's special effects. Several complained, however, that "the tone is never exactly comedic," as Maslin put it.

Advertising FRIGHT NIGHT simply as a vampire spoof, not as dark satire, made sense. In the previous year, 1984, the most successful horror movies were the comedies GHOSTBUSTERS, GREMLINS, and NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET. However, it's true that an atmosphere of melancholy undercuts the jokes in FRIGHT NIGHT.

As Harry M. Benshoff points out in his book, *Monsters in the Closet* (Manchester University Press, 1997), "Director Tom Holland makes a conscious use of homoerotics within the film to explore the idea of the queer vampire, a fact recently attested to by the now 'out' lesbian cast member Amanda Bearse . . . A closeted vampire, Jerry and his manservant Billy Cole are ironically posing as a gay male couple in order to infiltrate the suburbs where Charlie [sic.] lives."

Actually, Billy, seduced by the vampire, thinks that he and Jerry are a gay couple. Pretending they're stereotypical, mild-mannered antiques dealers makes an unthreatening cover story for a middle-class suburb where a filthy, drooling, insect-gobbling Renfield might look a tad conspicuous. The straight citi-

zens, too liberal to persecute homosexuals, but homophobic enough not to get too close, will leave the couple free to use this smug, tidy neighborhood as Jerry's blood bank.

As Benshoff observes, "Despite its . . . rather sympathetic take on queer outsider figures, the film nonetheless still partakes of the same demonizing tropes as do less sophisticated horror films: queerness is monstrous." He also notes that, "most of the mainstream reviews of FRIGHT NIGHT, more comfortable with a shadowy, connotative homosexuality, referred to Jerry Dandrige [sic.] not as a monster queer but more regularly as 'a dapper vampire' or a 'soigne neighbor,' euphemistically naming the homosexual by his sleek elegance."

On July 15, 1985, just two weeks before the release of FRIGHT NIGHT, the sensational story broke that Rock Hudson had advanced AIDS. Reporters stalked him relentlessly until he died on October 2. Some gay activists damned Hudson for concealing his homosexuality, and began to "out" other closeted actors. Right-wingers, who regarded Hollywood as Sodom and AIDS as a "gay plague," made Hudson the poster boy for divine retribution. Under these circumstances, writing about sensitive gay issues in the context of reviewing a horror comedy could have come across as tasteless, even cruel. Maybe the earliest reviewers felt inhibited as they wrote about FRIGHT NIGHT in the veiled language that now looks dishon-

PREVIOUS PAGE: Jerry Dandrige (Chris Sarandon) seduces Evil Ed (Stephen Geoffreys) into a life of vampirism . . . among other things. **BELOW:** Peter Vincent (Roddy McDowall) and Charley Brewster (William Ragsdale) represent the uneasy forces of good, though Peter is a coward and Charley is sorely tempted by the sins of the flesh (even if the flesh is dead).

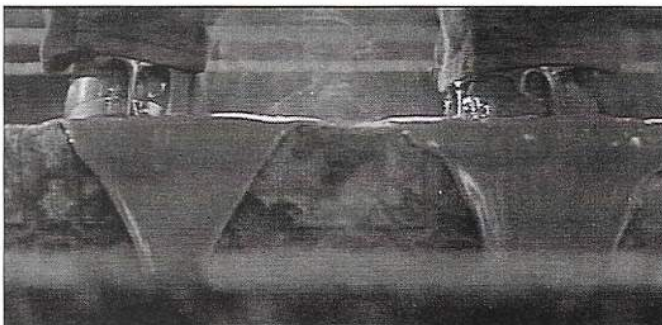




est. (By November 1985, reviewers of *MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE* wrote much more frankly about homosexuality, but this Stephen Frears comedy was billed as a controversial art film.) However, this accident of timing fails to explain why some writers, as recently as 1995, completely ignore the homosexuality in *FRIGHT NIGHT*.

Some commentators go too far the other way, by minimizing *FRIGHT NIGHT*'s equally strong heterosexual themes. Jerry's hot scenes with females don't look obligatory or "necessarily conventional," as Benshoff labels them. On the contrary, Jerry seduces women with demonic relish. Before he hunts virginal Amy, he preys on a female whore. When Charley watches Amy respond as Jerry blatantly gropes her on the dance floor, he lives out the adolescent boy's fear that an older, more sophisticated rival will steal his sweetheart. It isn't just gay sex that *FRIGHT NIGHT* makes monstrous. It's all sex, as teenage Charley struggles to find his place in the scary adult world.

Although Holland's vampires flinch from a cross (but only if the wielder believes in its power, in a variation on the main plot contrivance of Hammer's 1968 *DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE*) and decompose in sunlight, Dandrige swigs wine like Bacchus and munches apples, the forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden. It's unclear whether Dandrige is capable of sexual intercourse, but he uses intense foreplay to distract his victims from his bloodlust. He commits all the Seven Deadlies: pride, avarice, lust, anger, gluttony, envy—and even sloth, with his languid manner. Stalking Amy and Charley after he's done draining Evil Ed, Jerry saunters



TOP LEFT: Billy Cole (Jonathan Stark) suffers a combination meltdown/orgasm in the final scenes of *FRIGHT NIGHT* (1985). **BOTTOM LEFT:** A gallon or two of bodily fluid escapes from Billy's trouser legs. **ABOVE:** Amy Peterson (Amanda Bearse) is transformed into a toothsome, vaginal sick joke.

through the streets like a pampered cat that deigns to hunt a mouse now and then when he damn well feels like it.

Charley fights with the vampires in the old Apollonian versus Dionysian conflict: control versus hedonism. Steve Plunkett spells it out in his lyrics, performed by Autograph, on the soundtrack: "You Can't Hide From the Beast Inside." Charley must choose between taming himself into a civilized good boy or giving in to the temptations of the Beast as symbolized by Jerry Dandrige and Evil Ed.

Alive, Ed looks more self-conscious than evil, with his dyed hair, his headbanger music, the plastic skull decorating his bedroom, and other common trappings of a teenager scaring his elders. But under this defiant camouflage, Evil Ed is a closeted homosexual, attracted to Charley and jealous of Amy. Ed hides his anxieties behind a prank, pretending that a vampire has attacked him, then telling Charley (who has rushed to the rescue) to "Kill me before I turn into a vampire and give you a hickey!"

Laughing, Ed grabs at Charley, who recoils and shouts, "You asshole!" It's not clear whether Charley spurns this tentative advance as genuinely unwelcome. Maybe Charley denies his own secret suspicion that he might *enjoy* a "hickey" from Evil Ed.

Despite his bravado, Ed is so insecure that he's easy prey. Dandrige hunts Ed down until he falls into some garbage. That's how the boy feels, like a rejected piece of trash. The vampire offers Ed protection and a sense of belonging. "I know what it's like, being different," the vampire purrs. "They won't pick on you any more, or beat you up. I'll see to that. All you have to do is take my hand."

Stephen Geoffreys gives a fine performance in this scene, as Ed gives in to temptation. With a relieved expression on his face and tears in his eyes, he turns, buries his face against the vampire's shoulder, and nestles into the comforting embrace. A moment

later, the audience hears the boy, offstage, screaming. The truth hurts.

Later, Ed mugs at Charley from the tailgate of Dandridge's SRV. With his wild hair, his howling laugh, and his gaping mouth with pointed tongue lolling down to his chin, Ed strongly resembles a satyr, or the woodland gods feasted by ancient civilizations in orgiastic rites: Dionysus, the Green Man, Pan.

The *Washington Post* reviewer, Richard Harrington (August 5, 1985), comments that, "Holland obviously intended *FRIGHT NIGHT* as a redemptive film for a genre for which he has genuine affection. In one sly aside, he has McDowall complaining after his show has been canceled for low ratings: 'Nobody wants to see vampires anymore. All they want to see is some demented madman running around in a ski mask hacking up young virgins.' But when it comes to his own finale, Holland falls back on Edlund's grisly special effects and they are not substantially different from what he is complaining about."

On the contrary, Holland and Edlund skew these horror film clichés to spotlight things that "nice" people would rather not think about. When the vampire bites Amy, she turns sluttish, writhing like a cat

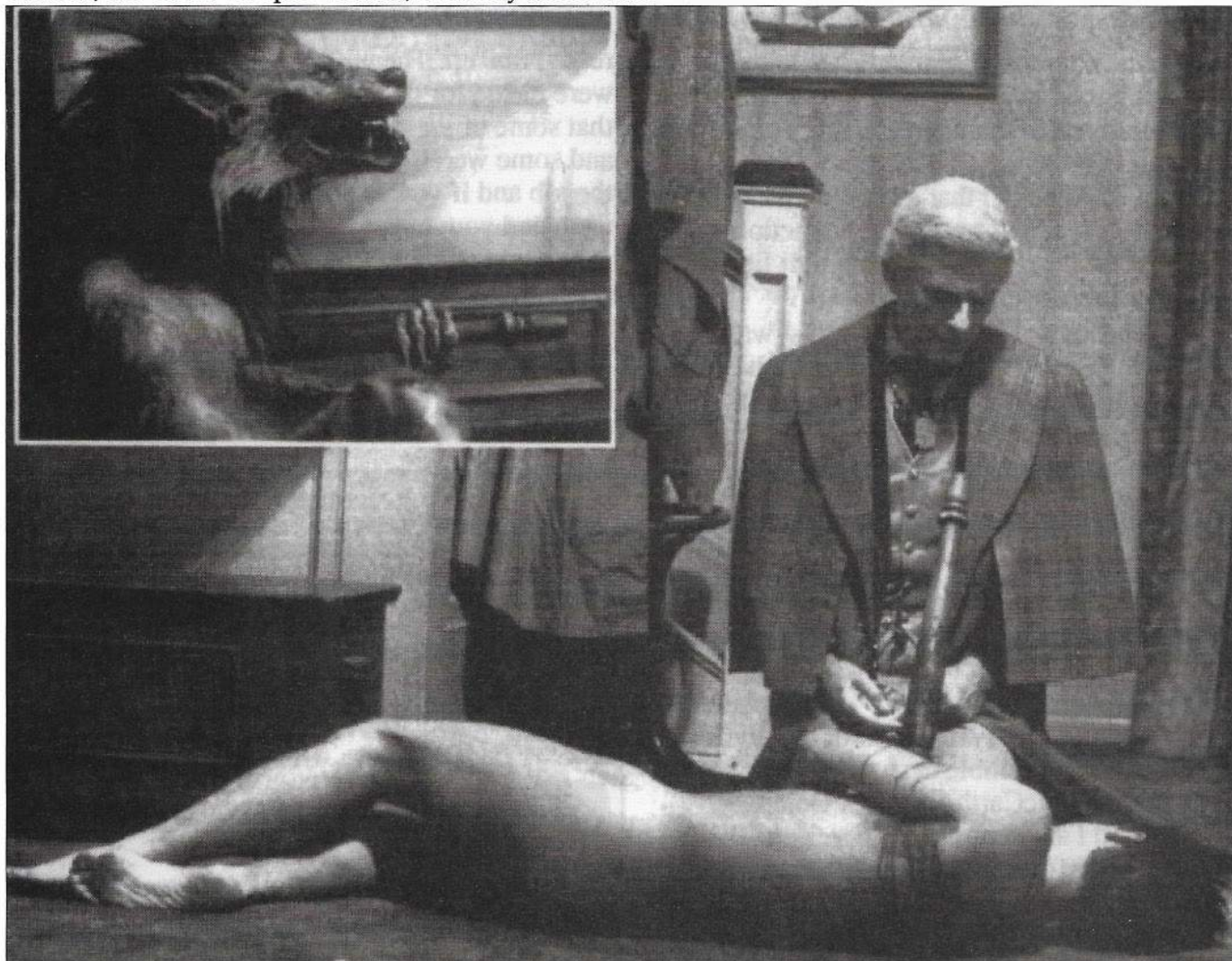
in heat. Nothing new . . . except that she grows not just fangs, but an impossibly enormous, red, juicy mouth, full of giant choppers, like a yawning vagina dentata.

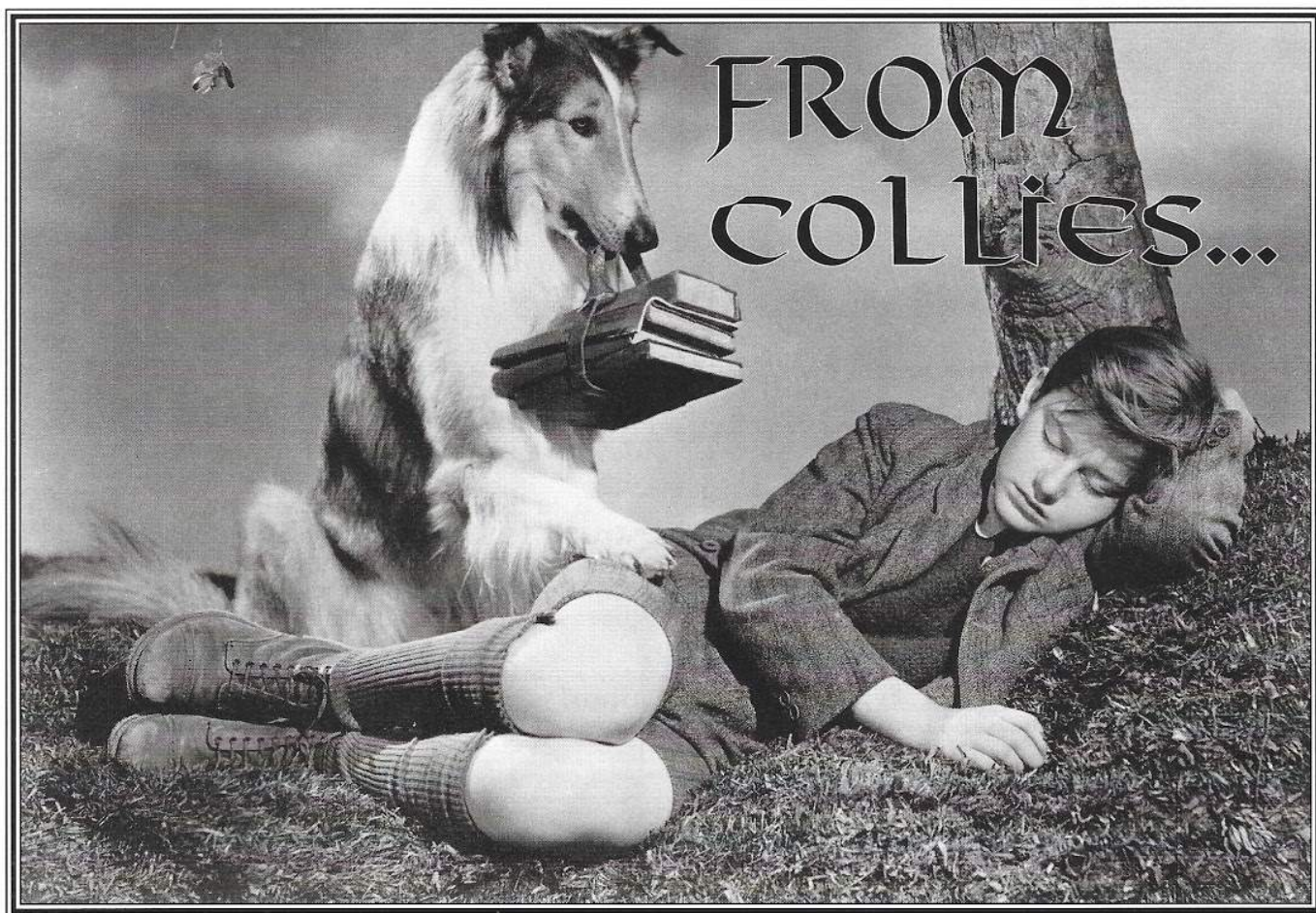
When Billy is staked (the film is sadly vague here; presumably he's become a vampire at some point, but the audience never witnesses the transformation), a bright green bodily fluid pours out around his feet, from inside the legs of his trousers. And pours. And pours. And pours! The camera keeps returning to this gusher, the standard vampiric decomposition carried to a comic ejaculatory extreme. For all its humor, this scene is also a nightmarish rendition of the fear of losing control of basic body functions in public: having an accidental orgasm, or pissing in one's pants. As all that symbolically sticky stuff flows away down some unseen drain, the audience enjoys a cathartic chuckle.

With the Dionysian vampires conquered, Amy reverts to her sweet, controlled little Apollonian self. She has tried out the forbidden slut role, but now she steps out of that movie. She gets her virginity back.

Continued on page 78

In the course of *FRIGHT NIGHT*, Evil Ed (Stephen Geoffreys) becomes a vampire who becomes a werewolf who becomes a naked dead boy who (thanks to the removal of a killing stake) becomes a vampire. Peter Vincent, the Great Vampire Hunter, is Roddy McDowall.





RODDY McDOWALL

interviewed by Danny Savello



He made *HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY* in 1941. He's the cartoon voice of the Mad Hatter in 1997. When it comes to lengthy careers, few actors hold a candle to Roddy McDowall. True, he started early, in 1938 at the age of 10, but that isn't necessarily a plus in the world of show biz. Preparing to celebrate his 60th year in the business next year, McDowall took the time to talk with *Scarlet Street* about his remarkable career, in which he's played everything from a vampire hunter to a chimp . . .

Scarlet Street: Do you come from an acting family?

Roddy McDowall: No, my mother always wanted to be an actress. She'd taken opera lessons and she was very taken with films, but she wasn't a professional.

SS: How old were you when you started acting?

RM: Well, I actually started modeling at the age of five, but the first actual job I did in the movies I was about seven or eight. I made a great many films in England, but there were only two or three which were long parts. I mostly played small parts until I came to America.

SS: The titles are intriguing. *MURDER IN THE FAMILY*, *POISON PEN*, *DEAD MAN'S SHOES* . . .

RM: *MURDER IN THE FAMILY* was the second film I made. The distinction of the cast was quite phenomenal. Barry Jones, a very distinguished British actor, Jessica Tandy, Dennis Strong . . . it was a small movie taken from the book *About a Murder in a Family*. There's nothing really remarkable about it. *POISON PEN* was a film with Flora Robson in which I played a very small role. *DEAD MAN'S SHOES* was a film with Leslie Banks that was rather a well-known remake of a French film.

SS: Did British filmmaking prepare you for Hollywood?

RM: What it did was that I was a professional by the time I came to America. I knew what it was like to be in film, but it didn't prepare me for acclimating to the Hollywood studio system, which was entirely different.

SS: In what way?

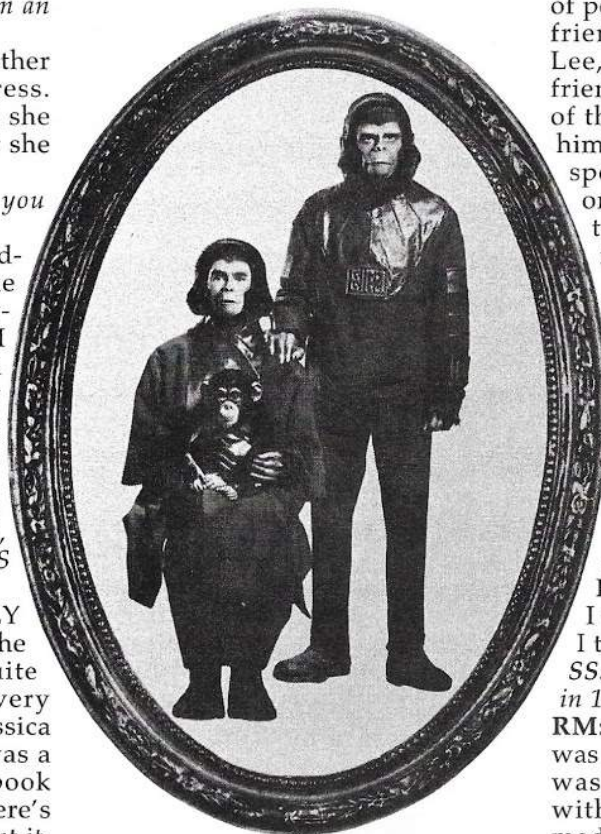
RM: Well, in those years the studios were a great big empire. If you were under contract, you were trained and privileged and ac-

cepted. British films didn't have, at that time, great studio cast lists. Alexander Korda had a stable of stars, but for the most part they were made in an entirely different way than studios in America.

SS: What brought you to the United States?

RM: The war. My father took my mother, sister, and myself to America for the duration. Within two weeks, I got cast for the film *HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY*.

SS: Wasn't your first American film *MANHUNT*?



RM: That was the first one made here, because *HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY* was initially to be made by William Wyler. Through a series of events, Wyler went on to other things and John Ford came on to do it . . . but, in the meantime, they put me in *MANHUNT*.

SS: Which was directed by Fritz Lang, who was known as being something of a tyrant.

RM: He was wonderful . . . very, very nice. I knew him on and off for the rest of his life and he was always very nice to me.

SS: Your costars in *MANHUNT* were Joan Bennett, George Sanders, and Walter Pidgeon.

RM: I made two films with Joan Bennett and she was very sweet,

but I didn't know her very well. Pidgeon I knew well, because we made three films together. I liked him very much. I also did *SON OF FURY* with Sanders, but I didn't know him well.

SS: *HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY* was the Oscar-winning Best Picture of 1941.

RM: Nobody realized it was going to be that much of a phenomenal success. It was a very happy film to make, because Ford was a very succinct director. He knew just what he wanted and there was no waste of time. It was a wonderful group of people. All of us remained good friends. Maureen O'Hara, Anna Lee, and myself are all still very friendly. James Monkson was one of the brothers and I haven't seen him in a while, but we still correspond. It made a big impression on all our lives and it became a tremendous launching implement. It was a huge success.

SS: Much of the 1940s involved you with four legged costars, including *Lassie* and *Flicka*. Do you find these are the films you're most asked about?

RM: No, not really, no more than films like *CLEOPATRA* or *FRIGHT NIGHT* or the Ape films.

SS: Are you an animal lover yourself?

RM: Yes. I don't have any, now. I used to have dogs and cats, but I travel so much.

SS: You worked with Orson Welles in 1948's *MACBETH*.

RM: We did it on the stage first. It was a strange experience, because it was prerecorded like a musical, with the concept that it could be made faster. It's not one of my favorite projects.

SS: Did you find it a difficult transition from child to adult actor?

RM: Oh, yes, because acting as a child bears no relation to acting as an adult. You're working on basic instinct and talent as a child; children have immense concentration. The craft has to be learned as you grow up. You don't have a sense of craft as a child.

SS: So you really have to start all over again. Do you think that's why so many child actors find it so hard to cope when they grow up?

RM: No, I don't think so, because so many have. There's a tendency on the part of the media to exploit that period, but it's simply not a fact. I can name people—Jodie Fos-



© 1964 Walt Disney Productions

LEFT: One of the true classics of the silver screen is *HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY* (1941), with Elsa Lanchester, McDowall, and Donald Crisp. **RIGHT:** Disney's *THAT DARN CAT* (1964) starred Dean Jones, McDowall, and Dorothy Provine.

ter, Kurt Russell, Dean Stockwell, Natalie Wood, Elizabeth Taylor, Mickey Rooney—just a huge group of people who made the transition without difficulty.

SS: But the ones who have had trouble are the ones who make the headlines.

RM: Well, that's exactly it. The troubled ones are much more provocative. The media drags them out every half decade to exploit some situation. There's so many that have had lives that have been totally productive. Look at Shirley Temple—she's had three careers in entertainment and a couple of oth-

ers on the side! So it really isn't a valid premise. A lot of children, when they grew up, decided they didn't want to be actors. Some of them became directors like Sidney Lumet and Ron Howard. It's not an accurate assessment.

SS: Was there a period when you found it hard to find work, or did you just sail on through?

RM: It's always hard; that never changes. Every performer is, to a large extent, a preconceived notion. If he finds success as an adult or a child in a certain sort of vehicle, then the studios start to think of

you in that light continually. It takes a tremendous amount of energy and persistence to break that mold and do something else. It's never easy; it just appears that way. Someone like Bette Davis with 60 years of unparalleled success or Katharine Hepburn—if you investigate, you'll find out that it's really not the case. As well as being very successful, they also had a string of disastrous flops. That happens to a great many people. It just isn't remembered.

SS: In the 1950s, you concentrated on stage and television work.

LEFT: Peter Ustinov (as Hercule Poirot) was joined by Colin Blakely, Jane Birkin, Nicholas Clay, Maggie Smith, Diana Rigg, Denis Quilley, Sylvia Miles, James Mason, Emily Hone, and Roddy McDowall. **RIGHT:** McDowall's early '70s long-hair period included a starring role on Rod Serling's *NIGHT GALLERY*.



© 1982 Universal City Studios, Inc.

"It was a very well-written script. Tom Holland, the man who wrote FRIGHT NIGHT, directed the film and he was very good. The character of Peter Vincent was fascinating to play, sort of like the Cowardly Lion."

RM: That was a marvelous period for me. I left California because there wasn't any productive work for me to do. I was a preconceived notion and, going to New York, I didn't realize it was going to be a bonanza. Live television was just coming into its own and that was such a great arena to learn. I also did theater at the same time, because everything was in the same place. That was a wonderful decade of education.

SS: When you returned to movies, it must have been a shock for *Lassie and Flicka* fans to find you in 1960's *THE SUBTERRANEANS*, which was based on a Jack Kerouac novel.

RM: No, because films made in the early '40s simply were not known in the late '50s the way they're known now. There wasn't a constant exposure to them. They were on television to a degree, but people didn't remember them. They didn't remember *HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY* with the same impact in 1958 that they do in 1997. So, in a sense, a lot of people seeing *THE SUBTERRANEANS* for the first time in the early '60s weren't really aware of the potency of my playing against my earlier image. I mean, the whole thing about Greta Garbo being a star . . . she was a complete unknown in the '50s, because she hadn't made a film since 1942! The Garbo comeback began in the late '50s when they started showing her films in the art houses in New York. A whole generation didn't know her name!

SS: When you made *THE SUBTERRANEANS*, had MGM changed much from its hey day?

RM: Oh, yes, they had all changed enormously. They didn't have the incredible stables of stars, they didn't have the star system . . .

SS: Were you at all a part of the Hollywood rebel crowd?

RM: Which crowd is that? (Laughs) No, I didn't live here. I lived in New York in the '50s and '60s. I would come out here to work.

SS: In the same year as *THE SUBTERRANEANS*, you appeared in a more traditional Hollywood picture

called *MIDNIGHT LACE*. Fittingly for a mystery, one of your costars was Nora Charles herself, Myrna Loy.

RM: I worked with Myrna often and we were very close friends. She was one of the most remarkable, enjoyable, endearing people I've ever known and one of the most talented film actresses I've ever seen. I don't know how one would compare her with Nora Charles, because the canon of her work is so extraordinary, but she and Bill Powell were a wonderful team. The thing about Myrna Loy that's always appealed to me is that she was always very modern. Nothing of her's ever dates. She's a completely now, up-to-date lady.

SS: *SHOCK TREATMENT* featured you as a crazed killer in a mental institution. Do you find it more enjoyable playing villainous characters than heroic ones?

RM: No, but villainous characters are fun to play. The character in *SHOCK TREATMENT* wasn't so much a villain as he was disturbed. Characters who are disturbed are a challenge to play.

SS: We're struck by the variety of your roles. In 1965 alone, you appeared in *THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD*, *THE LOVED ONE*, *THAT DARN CAT* . . .

RM: Oh, the role in *THAT DARN CAT* was wonderful to do. The director, Robert Stevenson, was very good. *THE LOVED ONE* was fantastic! The script was so good and the character was terrific. I worked with John Gielgud, a total delight. The film was not successful at all, though, any more than *LORD LOVE A DUCK*, made within that same period, which was a very good movie with Tuesday

Weld. I played a murderer in that, a terrific character.

SS: You were also the Bookworm on *BATMAN* . . .

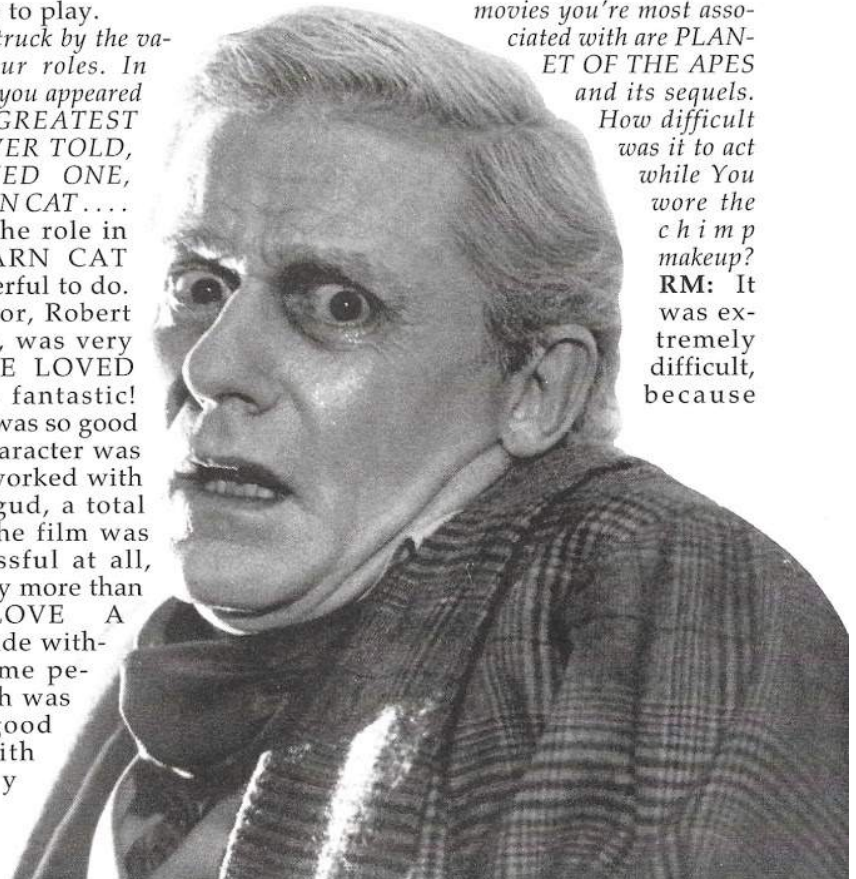
RM: I loved being the Bookworm. It was delightful to do those shows. There was supposed to be another appearance of the Bookworm, but I don't remember what happened. The schedule didn't work out, I imagine.

SS: You made a rather strange film called *IT*. One minute it's about the Golem and the next it's a *PSYCHO* takeoff with you talking to your mummified mother.

RM: *IT* was extremely aborted. The film just went totally to pieces and I really don't remember chapter and verse on it. It should have been rather good, actually, but it was very badly done. *IT* was actually my first real horror film. I had always wanted to do a horror film, but it was very bad as opposed to *THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE*, which was done a year later and was quite a good movie.

SS: For science fiction fans, the movies you're most associated with are *PLANET OF THE APES* and its sequels. How difficult was it to act while You wore the chimpanzee makeup?

RM: It was extremely difficult, because



trying to register under all that appliance necessitated a tremendous amount of imagination. We had to continually move our faces to show a lot of activity so we didn't look dead. It was an incredible challenge, but the films were fascinating to make and they were great characters.

SS: How long did it take to apply the chimp makeup?

RM: It took three and a half hours.

SS: Did the makeup process become less time consuming for the later films or the TV show?

SS: No, the quickest it could be accomplished was three hours.

SS: You missed *BENEATH THE PLANET OF THE APES*.

RM: I was filming in England at the time. With Ava Gardner, in *THE BALLAD OF TAM-LIN*.

SS: Have you a favorite of the films?

RM: Well, the first is a remarkable movie. I enjoyed the fourth and fifth because I liked playing my own son. In the TV series, I played another character called Galen, who was entirely separate from the rest. He was fun to do.

SS: It's interesting that it's as a human being that you wound up in a zoo in a *TWILIGHT ZONE* episode, "People Are Alike All Over." Rod Serling wrote that episode and *PLANET OF THE APES*, and also hosted *NIGHT GALLERY*, on which you appeared. Was Serling a presence on the *TWILIGHT ZONE* and *APE* sets?

RM: No, I met Rod on *NIGHT GALLERY*. He was a nice fellow; I liked him. We never had any great social or work association, though.

SS: *FIVE CARD STUD* was a hybrid film—part Western, part mystery.

RM: I don't think the film worked the way it read. It was a lot more obvious. I loved working with Robert Mitchum, though. He made such an effort to give the impression of being an actor who didn't care about acting, but I think he was a master craftsman.

SS: You mentioned *THE LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE*. What are your own feelings about haunted houses and the supernatural?

RM: I don't have any. I don't discount it, but it doesn't keep me awake nights. (Laughs)

SS: *HELL HOUSE* was the first and only film produced by James H. Nicholson following his departure from American International.

RM: He died shortly after the film was released and he didn't have a chance to do any more films. He

was very able. I liked him very much indeed. I thought *HELL HOUSE* was a well-crafted film; it holds up pretty well.

SS: You were one of the stars in *EVIL UNDER THE SUN*, playing a gossipy biographer of the stars named Rex, a character who isn't in Agatha Christie's novel.



After the original, *ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE APES* (1971) is the best loved of the series—but Roddy McDowall (pictured with Kim Hunter) preferred the last two installments, *CONQUEST OF . . .* (1972) and *BATTLE FOR . . .* (1973).

RM: In the book it was a woman, I gather. That was interesting to me, because the cast was so terrific and the design of the film was so beautiful. Christie characters are so delicious to do.

SS: Could Rex have been based on a living gossipy biographer of the stars?

RM: No, I don't think so. It's a composite of a lot of different people. It's just a pastiche.

SS: Let's talk about Peter Vincent. What attracted you to the horror host character in *FRIGHT NIGHT*?

RM: It was a very well-written script. Tom Holland, the man who wrote it, directed the film and he was very good. The character of Peter Vincent was fascinating to play, sort of like the Cowardly Lion. Tom Holland really did the film marvelously, because it has great humor in it and tension—like *DEAD OF WINTER*, which was not a success but was a very good movie.

SS: As you said, *FRIGHT NIGHT* marked the directorial debut of Tom Holland. Was it difficult being a 40

year veteran of film and working with a first-timer?

RM: No, I'd known him. He was an actor many years before that, so that was never a problem. He was very talented; he had a strong grasp of the material, because he'd written it and he knew how he wished it to evolve. He was extremely professional.

SS: Did you have any suggestions about the character that found their way into the film?

RM: I think that happens when you're working with a good director. Everybody brings something to their part and things grow of themselves. It's a wedding of suggestions and ideas.

SS: Was there ever a fear on your part that starring in *FRIGHT NIGHT* might peg you as a star of horror movies, another Boris Karloff or Vincent Price?

RM: No, I don't think that way. I worked with Karloff a couple of times and he was a lovely man. We worked on television together in *HEART OF DARKNESS*. Vincent Price, I worked with a lot. He was a very dear friend, but Vincent has done a great many films that had nothing to do with the horror genre. We toured together on the stage in *CHARLEY'S AUNT*. He was a wonderful man.

SS: You're now involved vocally with the *Batman* animated series as Jervis Tetch, the Mad Hatter.

RM: Oh, I love playing the character of the Mad Hatter! I've done voiceover before. I was the voice of the Robot in *THE BLACK HOLE*. I did *THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS*, which is a cartoon.

SS: It's performed much like a radio show, isn't it?

RM: Yes, just like that.

SS: What would you consider your favorite film experiences?

RM: My favorite? I loved making the *WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER* and *HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY*, *CLEOPATRA*, and *LORD LOVE A DUCK . . .*

SS: That's quite a variety.

RM: Usually one's favorite films are based on the life experiences one has had during the progress of the film. Other pictures that haven't been enormously clever or inventive—even though they might have been successful—well, you still don't have the same affection for them.



DIAL "E" FOR EVIL!

Stephen Geoffreys

interviewed by Kevin G. Shinnick

Talk about a wide-ranging career! Stephen Geoffreys, who shot to horror film fame as Evil Ed in *FRIGHT NIGHT* (1985), has been a Tony-nominated Broadway musical star, a movie star, a star of gay adult movies, and a star of direct-to-video male nudies! In this exclusive *Scarlet Street* interview, Geoffreys once more reveals all . . .

Scarlet Street: How did you get the part of Evil Ed in *FRIGHT NIGHT*?

Stephen Geoffreys: It's pretty interesting, really. My agent sent me out on an audition for *WEIRD SCIENCE* instead of Anthony Michael Hall. I was sent there by mistake! The casting director said, "Wait a minute! You're not Anthony Michael Hall!" So I said no, and I poured on all the charm to take advantage of the situation. We talked for about 20 minutes about this and that, whatever. A few months later, I was filming a movie called *FRATERNITY VACATION* and she was casting *FRIGHT NIGHT*. She remembered me from that interview and the rest is history. I got the part just from being sent out on an audition by mistake! That's how things happen sometimes in show business. You can prepare all you want, but things happen a lot by chance. Luck has a lot to do with getting parts.

SS: Had you done anything before *FRATERNITY VACATION*?

SG: Before that I made one other movie—*HEAVEN HELP US*—and that's actually my favorite of all I've done. It's a great script and we had wonderful people. I got my part from performing in a play on Broadway, a musical called *THE HUMAN COMEDY*. I actually got nominated for a Tony Award and I got a Theater World Award and a lot of recognition. The producer and director of *HEAVEN HELP US* saw me on stage and cast me in the

film. I did about three or four movies right in a row, and that was right out of college. It happened real fast, but I have no complaints.

SS: Is your first love the stage?

SG: Oh, by far—and, more specifically, musical theater. Yeah, I really have more fun doing musical theater than anything. I love the old MGM musicals from the '30s, '40s, and '50s. I can sit and watch them and never get tired. They're just such pure, magical entertainment.

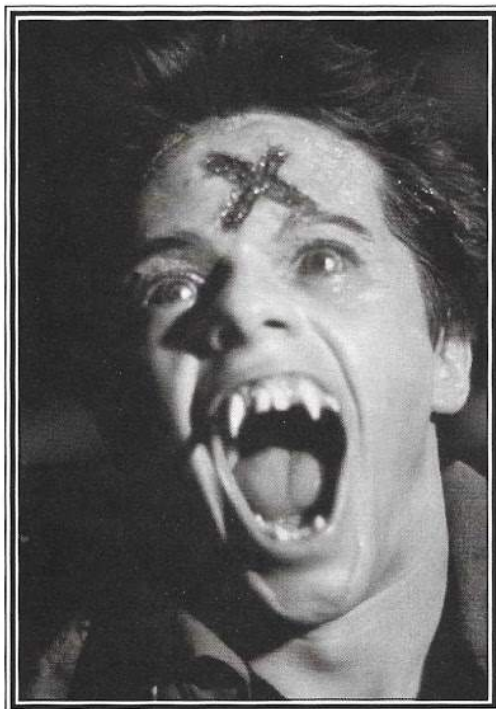
SS: In your films, you've played offbeat characters. Most of them have been outcasts, really . . .

SG: Well, it's weird; I don't know why I get offered these parts. When they sent me the script for *FRIGHT NIGHT*, I said I'd love to play the part and had every intention of playing the part of Charley Brewster, the main kid. My agent said, "No, Steve, they want you to play the part of Evil Ed." I had no idea why they wanted me for that part. I didn't see what it was in me that people saw. I didn't believe I could play it, but I think I did a decent job.

SS: It's a memorable performance.

SG: It's just another character; I don't look at a crazy character as being particularly hard or easy to play. A crazy person doesn't know they're crazy. As far as they're concerned, they're as normal as can be, so when you're playing a character like that it's just another character trait, just another layer to put on it.

SS: Did you enjoy playing Ed?



SG: It's fun playing those kind of parts . . . especially in horror movies, with the makeup and stuff, and especially the ones I've done with makeup people like Steve Johnson, Kevin Yeager, and Richard Englund. They're all incredibly talented people. When you're working with people who are such good artists, it makes your work so much easier. They put all the makeup on and, when it's done, you look in the mirror and it's like—wow! Despite the pain and suffering involved with the makeup and the special effects, it's worth it—especially in my case, because the people who did it did such a great job. It's like putting on this incredibly cool Halloween costume and getting out there and playing a monster. It's great!

SS: Any special memories of making *FRIGHT NIGHT*?

SG: Making a horror movie is very time consuming. It takes more patience than any job in the world. One of the things that was kind of interesting was in the scene where Roddy McDowall pulled the blanket off my head and I have this Raggedy Ann wig on. One of the reasons I did so well with that is because Roddy did something that made me mad. It was a really stupid thing at lunch, but I thought, "I'm really going to show him!" So I tried to outdo him. It gave me motivation to do really well and it turned out great.

SS: What else do you remember about the shoot?



LEFT: Evil Ed (Stephen Geoffreys) Charley (William Ragsdale), and Amy (Amanda Bearse) have an interview with the vampire (Chris Sarandon) in *FRIGHT NIGHT* (1985). **RIGHT:** Raggedy Ann? Raggedy Andy? Ragged Dick? No, it's Evil Ed in vampire drag.

SG: Just that it was long! (Laughs) It took a long time, but for the most part the director, Tom Holland, was the best. He had a very specific idea of what he wanted done and he did a terrific job of getting it on screen. Working for him was just a blast. A real sweet guy.

SS: Did he give you any specifics on characterization or did he leave you to your own devices?

SG: In the beginning, he wanted us all to write a very detailed character assessment and the whole history of the characters. The way I worked in movies up till that point was just to get in front of the camera and do it. It was in my head already what I wanted, so when it came time for having that stuff all ready I said, "Oh, I don't need to write anything down." He panicked and said he'd have to get somebody else to play the part, so I said, "Okay, I'll go and I'll write a big history of this character"—and I did it in about two hours. Three hundred pages at Bob's Big Boy on Riverside and Burbank, and I frantically wrote because I didn't want to lose the part. (Laughs) They thought I wasn't prepared, when in fact I was, but just in my head. So I wrote it down and showed it to him and he said, "Oh, my God, this is incredible!" Tom definitely wanted to be sure that his actors knew what they were doing. In casting the characters, he did a great job because he picked the right actors to play his vision of the characters. He definitely knew what he was

doing on the set. It was a great shoot as far as the direction went. He was very specific.

SS: Speaking of the cast, what was it like working with Roddy McDowall?

SG: Oh, Roddy is a really genuine, truly professional actor. I would say he's one of the most reliable actors in Hollywood. He's been around forever and endured all the different stages of his career. A real nice guy.

SS: And Christopher Sarandon?

SG: He's very, very dedicated. He put a lot of charisma into the character. Another real nice guy, a family man sort of person.

SS: What about William Ragsdale, who wound up playing Charley?

SG: He was a buddy; we hung out. I think it was his first movie, so he was on his toes and a little nervous, but we got along.

SS: Amanda Bearse?

SG: We did *FRATERNITY VACATION* and *FRIGHT NIGHT* back to back. I didn't hang out with her. You go to the set and do your job, but when you go home at night you hang out with your friends who are plumbers and carpenters and whatever. I'm kind of a regular guy. I love acting; I love doing it, but the people I identify with or like to go have drinks with are regular people. I do have a few close friends who are actors, but just because of who they are, not because they're actors. I don't hang out with a lot of actors, but everyone in *FRIGHT NIGHT* was great, very dedicated. It was a good time.

SS: The fact that he's vampirised adds more depth to Evil Ed's character.

SG: The whole pathos of the role comes to a head, the whole tragic part of it when I'm raising up my hand to be saved by Roddy McDowall. Of course, by that time, it's too late. Ed's already been seduced by the vampire, but that shows the whole sadness of it. It's like the decision Ed makes to actually grab the vampire's hand in the alley. It's a tragedy; it's really a very tragic part. Ed is confused, because he's into the whole vampire thing—reading the comic books, collecting the models, and all that stuff. He thinks they aren't real, so it's ironic that he's picked to enter into that world, and then he ends up getting killed and it's just sad. A lot of people identify with Evil Ed and how he behaves, the craziness and stuff . . .

SS: It's interesting, too, that the vampire is bisexual. When Ed is seduced into becoming a vampire, he's seduced in another sense as well.

SG: I was kind of afraid to think of it in that way. I thought, "Oh, my God, this is Hollywood and everything is supposed to be so straight and kept deep inside." When Chris Sarandon reached his hand down and wrapped his coat around me, I thought, "Wow, man, this is intense!" There was a definite sexual energy coming from him. In the whole scene itself, in the way it's written, he's definitely a "bi kinda guy." There's no doubt about it. Living with his friend, his partner

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(Fright Night, 976-EVIL)



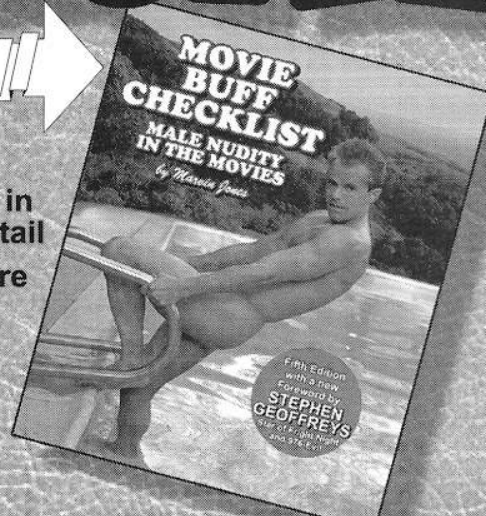
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... it's set up that way. It isn't flatly stated, but it's there.

SS: What do you think of the controversy over INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE, when producer David Geffen and director Neil Jordan denied the homoerotic content of the story?

SG: That was just to sell tickets, because teenagers out in Iowa were going to think, "Oh, gross! Gay guys; how sick!"

SS: In other words, kill the vampire, but don't kiss him!

SG: That's all that was.

SS: Do you think sexuality is simply inherent in the character, that the idea of a vampire is sexual because it's a power creature?

SG: I think—especially with Bela Lugosi's interpretation, it's incredibly sexual. It's a definite overriding theme of the character. Sucking blood—how much more intimate can you get? It certainly gets me excited thinking about it.

SS: You don't believe in vampires yourself, do you?

SG: I don't, not at all. When I got the part, I didn't know anything about this stuff. I had to take myself to these stores and occult shops in Los Angeles. I hung up all these Vampirella posters and cobwebs in my hotel room just to get into it.

SS: In the film, Evil Ed turns into a wolf. Then he's staked and slowly, painfully turns back into a boy as he dies.

SG: The transformation scene was around 10 hours and it was one of the most traumatic things I've ever been through. I was sitting in this chair with three guys putting their hands everywhere and putting things all over me. It was really bizarre. But when I saw it in the theater, it was like, "Wow! Who cares?" It was worth it.

SS: Did they have to do a full cast of your body?

SG: Yeah. They did my head, too, and it wasn't fun. That part of it sucks.

SS: Thanks to the stake being removed, Ed is still alive at FRIGHT NIGHT's end. Why weren't you in the sequel?

SG: If Tom Holland had decided to do the sequel, I think the script would have been a lot better. I think the second one sucked. I was actually offered FRIGHT NIGHT 2

and 976-EVIL, which started filming the same day, basically. I wanted to work with Robert Englund, so I thought EVIL was the better choice—and actually, it was.

SS: Englund directed 976-EVIL. How would you describe working for an actor/director?

SG: Being an actor himself, he knew where I was coming from, and he had sensitivity for other actors. Of course, when you're directing a horror film, you've got to be on top of it. It was his first directing effort and he did a great job. He's a wonderful guy. I love him; he's great. I really like Robert a lot.



HEAVEN HELP US (1985), in which Stephen Geoffreys played a chronic masturbator, is the actor's favorite film. His costars included Andrew McCarthy, Patrick Dempsey, Kevin Dillon, and Malcolm Danare.

SS: Any other horror films?

SG: I did kind of a horror movie called THE CHAIR, with James Coco. That was a really cool movie. I did an episode of AMAZING STORIES, directed by Robert Stevens, and I did a TWILIGHT ZONE episode. I also did a movie called MOON 44 in Germany with Malcolm McDowell, Michael Pare, and Lisa Eichhorn.

SS: So you're used to films with lots of special effects?

SG: Kevin Yeager, who made 976-EVIL, was great. He's really cool. He knows what he's doing; he's a nice guy and very talented. It's always fun to work with someone who's talented.

SS: Is shooting a picture in Germany much different from Hollywood?

SG: No, actually, it's the same boring, tedious kind of job. Roland Emmerich was the director. I think this was his first or second film. He was kind of figuring things out along the way. He's very young, but he did a great job.

SS: From that he went to the megahit STARGATE.

SG: I was very surprised and happy, because he's such a nice guy. I'm always happy to see someone who's such a sweet person become a success.

SS: What projects are in the works for you?

SG: I took a self-imposed hiatus, but now I'm ready to jump back into the biz. I just finished shooting a little film called FAMOUS AGAIN with Quentin Crisp and Georgina Spelvin. It's a cool little movie. I think everyone in the entire United States should rent a copy! (Laughs) It's about an older gentleman who used to be a famous movie star. He decides to get back into the limelight. He writes a false book about abusing his son, the book becomes a sensational best seller, and he winds up on this talk show.

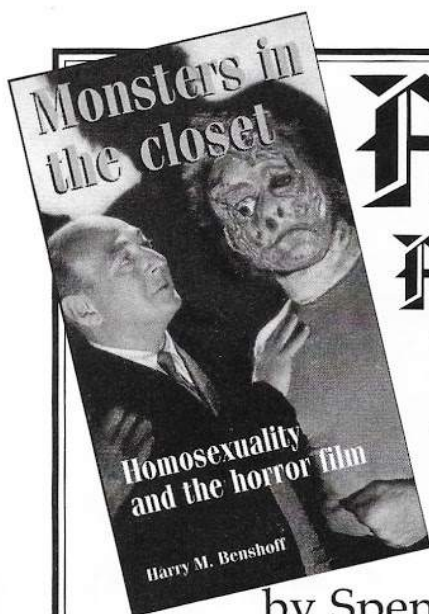
SS: What did you do with yourself during your hiatus?

SG: I was just collecting myself. I'd worked so much after college. I did gay adult movies and TV and a lot of plays and it happened so fast that I needed to step back and look at what was going on. I looked, I saw, and here I am, ready to do it again.

SS: Aren't you nervous about getting back into it again?

SG: No, I'm more excited than nervous... well, yeah, I am nervous; I'm not going to lie about it. It's pretty much the same as it was when I left, so I'm excited and nervous about getting back into it.

Isn't it time you subscribed to Scarlet Street? See Page Seven for details!



More Monsters Bigger Closets

by Spenser Benedict

Harry M. Benshoff's *Monsters in the Closet: Homosexuality and the Horror Film* (Manchester University Press, 1997) is simply one of the most profound and innovative examinations of the monster film genre ever written. For years, horror films and monsters have been the subject of every type of academic scrutiny possible—covering everything from sociology to Fascism. It is only now, at this late date, that the monster has been equated with gay men and women, and the way homosexual human beings have been demonized by popular culture.

Benshoff's take on the material is interesting throughout, but he is no apologist. It is not his belief that all the monsters and horror films from Hollywood's Golden Age all the way through Jason and Freddy are steeped solely in a gay subtext; however, he does argue convincingly that many of these films can be read as a code for homosexual behavior (and the punishment for it) when viewed in the proper frame of mind.

Approaching films as diverse as *WHITE ZOMBIE* (1932), *THE SEVENTH VICTIM* (1942), *HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER* (1958), *THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES* (1971), *NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET PART 2: FREDDY'S REVENGE* (1985, pictured), and *NIGHTBREED* (1990), Benshoff is able to find the gay subtext of all of them while accommodating their individual styles and eras. The author's range extends even to the pages of this magazine, with Benshoff extolling *Scarlet Street* for helping to open the closet door to a fresh examination of the classic movie monsters.

Sometimes *Closet* makes its case so clearly and succinctly that it is amazing that the gay subtext of certain films were not commonly accepted up front all along. His readings of four teenage monster films of the 1950s—I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF (1957), I WAS A TEENAGE FRANKENSTEIN (1957), BLOOD OF DRACULA (1957), and HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER (1958)—are particularly lucid in their arguments. Given the cultural milieu of the '50s, the notion that the "troubled youths" of these films (Michael Landon, Gary Conway, Sandra Harrison, and Gary Clarke) were being subverted by older role

models (Whit Bissell, Louise Lewis, and Robert Harris) into behavior repugnant to the mainstream could easily be seen as attacks against "homosexual recruitment."

Also clever is Benshoff's argument that a quartet of Vincent Price's AIP films—*THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES*, *DR. PHIBES RISES AGAIN* (1972), *THEATRE OF BLOOD* (1973), and *MADHOUSE* (1974)—are tacitly about a "queer avenger." After reading the author's analysis, the reader can only wonder . . . why, yes, of course they are! Phibes can almost be seen as a gay golem striking out on behalf of the gay ghetto . . . and in the context, he takes on an added dimension that makes the films all the more enjoyable.

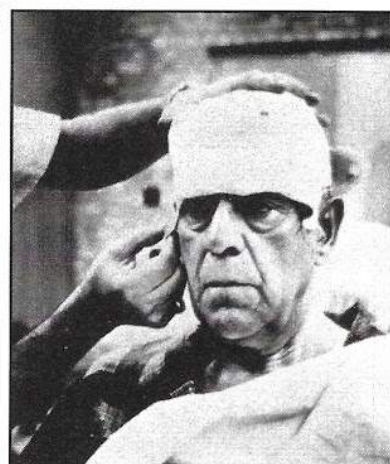
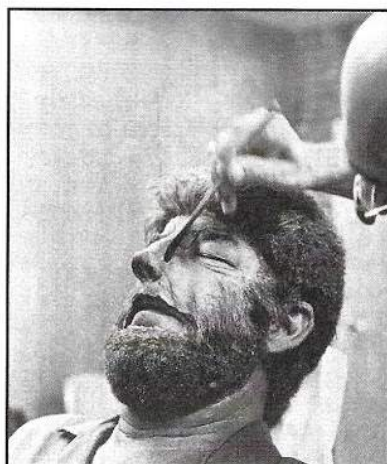
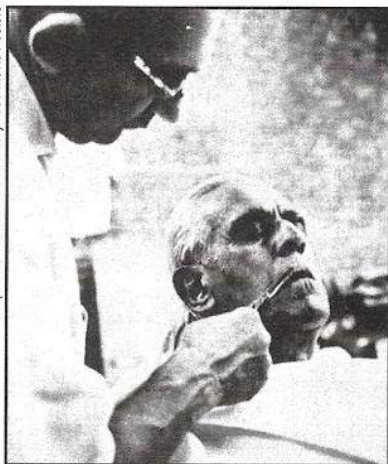
Benshoff is on shakier ground when trying to adopt his thesis as an argument that blankets all horror films. In the case of *DR. PHIBES*, Benshoff is right on the money. But when he's off base, such as when he interprets Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi in *THE BLACK CAT* and *THE RAVEN* as "a monstrously queer sadomasochistic male couple," he misses the mark by a good country mile.

Another problem the book labors under is the academic language that Benshoff employs. While it's obvious that the earliest draft of the book existed as a doctoral thesis, *Monsters in the Closet* perhaps needed one more edit to make it more accessible to an audience outside the fields of academic literary and film criticism.

But these criticisms pale compared to the overall importance of Benshoff's achievement. *Monsters in the Closet* is easily one of the finest, most intensely reasoned deconstructions of the horror film genre ever written, and should take its place among the handful of essential books on the genre.

© New Line Cinema, 1985





Lizard's Leg and Owllet's Wing Memorable Kicks on Route 66

by David Wilke

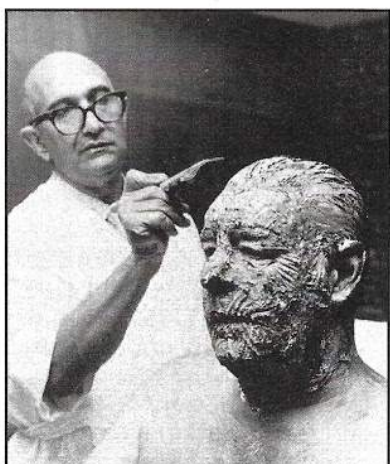
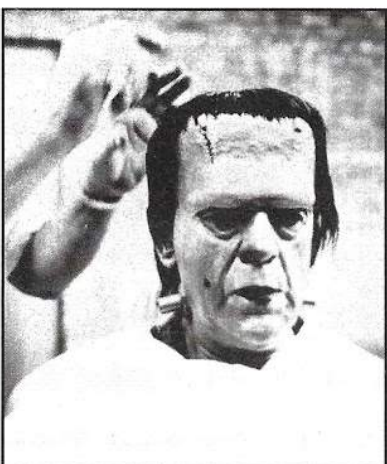
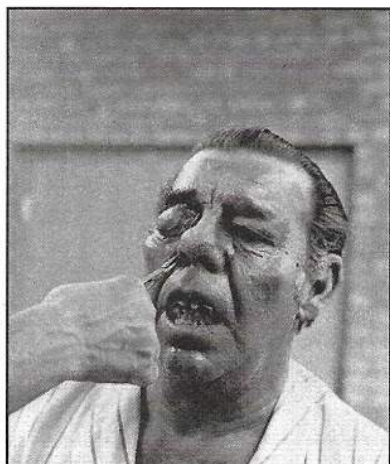
I can still recall my whereabouts as a six-year-old boy on the night of October 26, 1962. On that unforgettable evening, I discovered a world both fascinating and frightening.

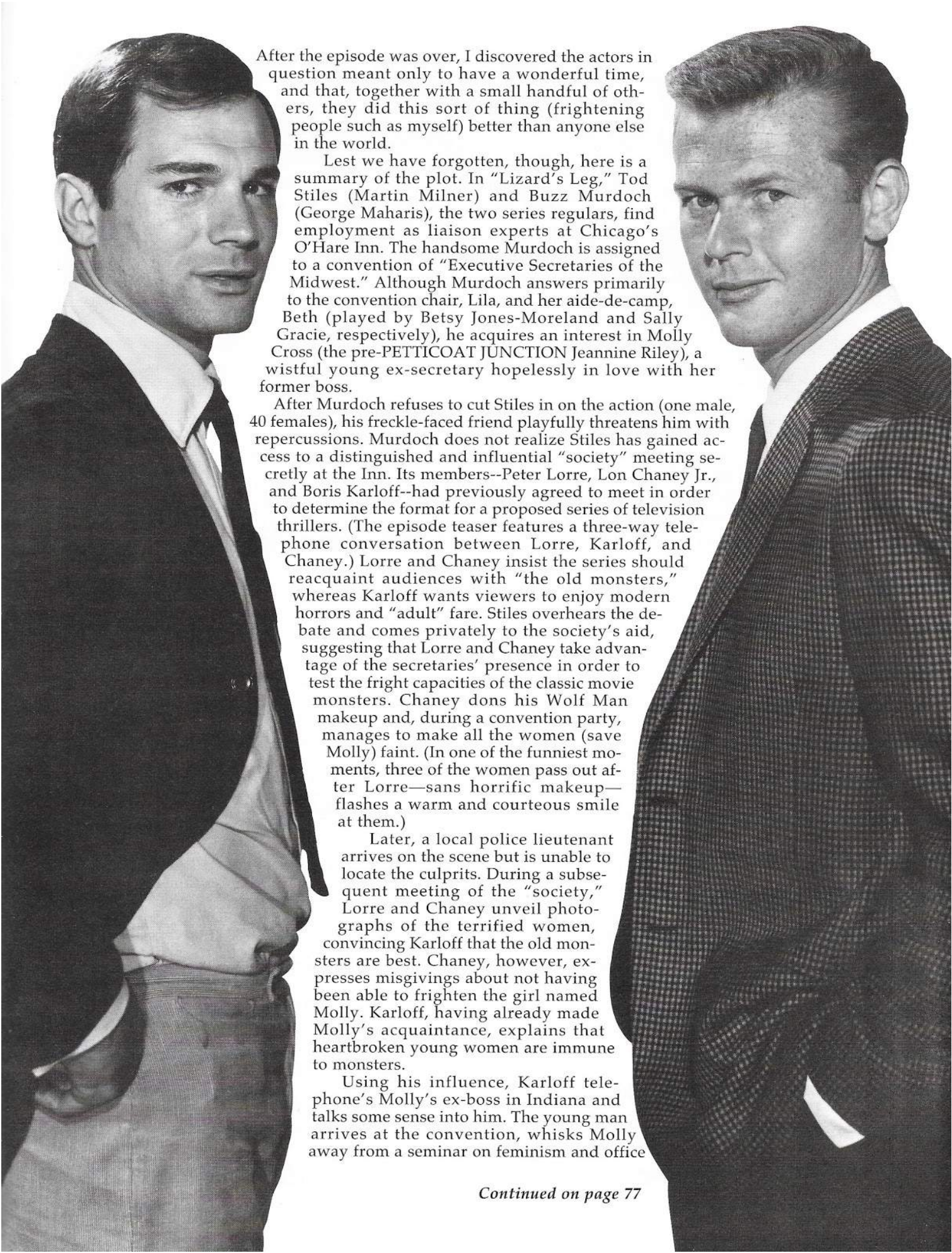
During the early 1960s, the CBS television series ROUTE 66 (starring Martin Milner and George Maharis, the latter eventually replaced by Glenn Corbett) had become a familiar presence in our home. The Friday night show was one of my mother's all-time favorites. Although it was a dramatic and avant-garde series aimed at adults, ROUTE 66 managed to leave some lasting impressions even with me. (To this day, for instance, I retain in memory such salient images as that of George Maharis heroically diving into a swimming pool to rescue a wheelchair-bound paraplegic who had attempted to drown himself.)

Nevertheless, in the fall of 1962 I had no reason to expect that any particular episode of ROUTE 66 would foster a permanent change in my own consciousness. But then, on that October night, neither I nor millions of other viewers nationwide expected to witness what

is arguably the most famous monster episode in television history: "Lizard's Leg and Owllet's Wing."

I knew there had to be something special about the "Lizard's Leg" segment of ROUTE 66 when my parents began to identify each of the guest stars. They seemed to express both surprise and delight in uttering the names: Peter Lorre . . . Boris Karloff . . . Lon Chaney, Jr. Save for Michael Ansara, who two years earlier we had all admired as the Indian marshal on NBC's LAW OF THE PLAINSMAN, I had rarely heard my parents identify actors by name. Surely, I reasoned, there must be something special about these people. I wondered, though, how my parents could not be terrified when one of the actors appeared to turn into a werewolf halfway through the episode. (For those who remember, when Chaney's hairy paw reached out to light that woman's cigarette during the cocktail party, I nearly jumped out of my skin.) And how could they not, like the young woman at the end of the episode, fall under the strange spell of Frankenstein's Monster and his ghoulish companions?





After the episode was over, I discovered the actors in question meant only to have a wonderful time, and that, together with a small handful of others, they did this sort of thing (frightening people such as myself) better than anyone else in the world.

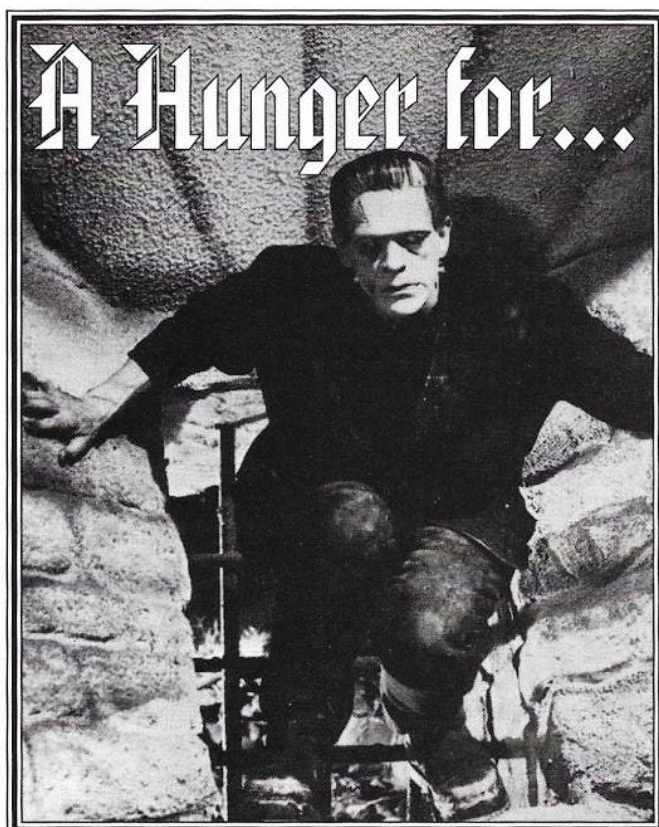
Lest we have forgotten, though, here is a summary of the plot. In "Lizard's Leg," Tod Stiles (Martin Milner) and Buzz Murdoch (George Maharis), the two series regulars, find employment as liaison experts at Chicago's O'Hare Inn. The handsome Murdoch is assigned to a convention of "Executive Secretaries of the Midwest." Although Murdoch answers primarily to the convention chair, Lila, and her aide-de-camp, Beth (played by Betsy Jones-Moreland and Sally Gracie, respectively), he acquires an interest in Molly Cross (the pre-PETTICOAT JUNCTION Jeannine Riley), a wistful young ex-secretary hopelessly in love with her former boss.

After Murdoch refuses to cut Stiles in on the action (one male, 40 females), his freckle-faced friend playfully threatens him with repercussions. Murdoch does not realize Stiles has gained access to a distinguished and influential "society" meeting secretly at the Inn. Its members--Peter Lorre, Lon Chaney Jr., and Boris Karloff--had previously agreed to meet in order to determine the format for a proposed series of television thrillers. (The episode teaser features a three-way telephone conversation between Lorre, Karloff, and Chaney.) Lorre and Chaney insist the series should reacquaint audiences with "the old monsters," whereas Karloff wants viewers to enjoy modern horrors and "adult" fare. Stiles overhears the debate and comes privately to the society's aid, suggesting that Lorre and Chaney take advantage of the secretaries' presence in order to test the fright capacities of the classic movie monsters. Chaney dons his Wolf Man makeup and, during a convention party, manages to make all the women (save Molly) faint. (In one of the funniest moments, three of the women pass out after Lorre--sans horrific makeup--flashes a warm and courteous smile at them.)

Later, a local police lieutenant arrives on the scene but is unable to locate the culprits. During a subsequent meeting of the "society," Lorre and Chaney unveil photographs of the terrified women, convincing Karloff that the old monsters are best. Chaney, however, expresses misgivings about not having been able to frighten the girl named Molly. Karloff, having already made Molly's acquaintance, explains that heartbroken young women are immune to monsters.

Using his influence, Karloff telephone's Molly's ex-boss in Indiana and talks some sense into him. The young man arrives at the convention, whisks Molly away from a seminar on feminism and office

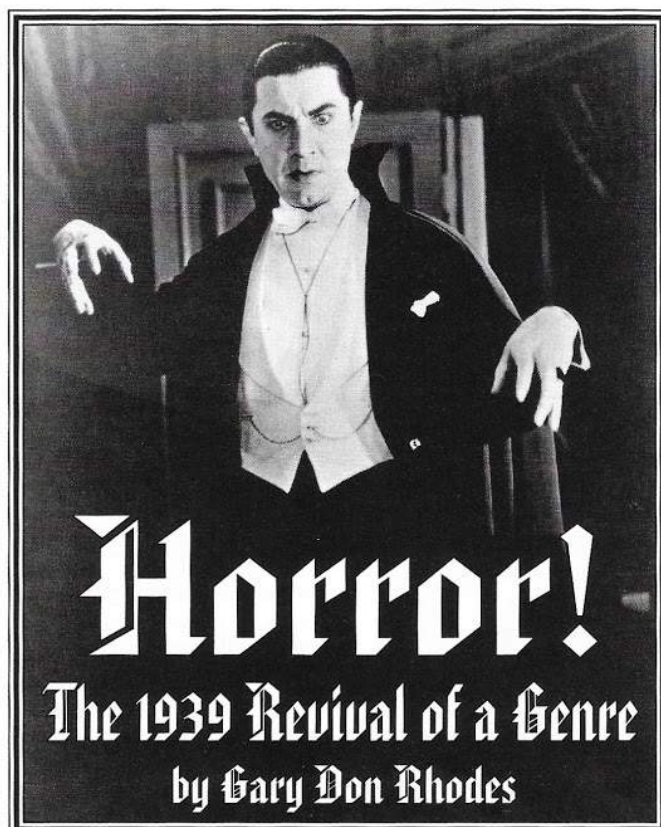
Continued on page 77



In 1938, the cinema—as well as most every sector of American society—faced financial difficulties during a recessive stage of the Great Depression. Late summer and autumn focused America's attention on the horrors of the real world. In addition to such major American issues as the James J. Hines trial, which attempted to topple the corrupt powers of New York's political machine, the country felt the mounting tensions in Europe. Prime Minister Chamberlain's "Peace in our time" faded into fears of another war. Germany's demands for the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia disquieted a world still unsure of Hitler's goals. Hovering over such problems was the spectre of economic Depression, still prolonging financial woes in America.

Double bills, bank nights, free dishes, and other gimmicks were strategies to get American patrons into movie-theater seats—yet one of the most successful ticket-selling events was the return of horror. The genre had disappeared from mid-1936 studio production schedules and didn't reappear until a reissue of two classics, *DRACULA* (1931) and *FRANKENSTEIN* (1931), prompted a national revival. Horror came back in a strong, decisive manner, and an investigation of cities and audiences yields the fact that, even if the films had been absent from theater marquees, interest in the genre had remained.

Arguably, horror films in America had begun as a cinematic movement during 1931, when *DRACULA* and later *FRANKENSTEIN* created a strong interest in the macabre. Earlier examples can be offered, but—on the whole—such movies essentially consisted of the mutilated or deformed character creations of Lon Chaney Sr. (who, as biographer Michael Blake notes, was never really a "horror star" in the manner of Lugosi and Karloff), the comedic "old dark house" films that inspired almost as many giggles as chills,



and such cinematic fare as *DANTE'S INFERNO* (1924), which, despite horrifying elements, was essentially a morality tale. Both *DRACULA* and *FRANKENSTEIN* ushered in an era of U.S. films that seriously addressed such issues as the supernatural, the fantastic, Satanism, and the "mad scientist." Along with *DRACULA* and *FRANKENSTEIN*'s respective sequels, such films as *MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE* (1932), *WHITE ZOMBIE* (1932), *ISLAND OF LOST SOULS* (1933), *THE BLACK CAT* (1934), *THE RAVEN* (1935), and *WEREWOLF OF LONDON* (1935) became the cornerstones of the genre.

The disappearance of such movies after mid-1936 is almost completely explained by what historians have referred to as the "British Ban" on horror films. True, various groups in the United States opposed the production of such movies, basing their views not only on morality and religion, but on such arguments as the medical problems that could result from exposure. (For example, one physician wrote *The New York Times* in 1935 citing the "extreme nervousness" caused by that year's *MARK OF THE VAMPIRE*.) Nevertheless, the halt of the '30s horror cycle resulted mainly from producers' fears of losing the \$20 million weekly gross from moviegoers in England, Wales, and Scotland.

By 1934, some 70 percent of the motion pictures screened in England were imports from Hollywood, with the British Board of Film Censors maintaining a strict watch over all cinematic fare. While the BBFC banned MGM's *FREAKS* (1932) and Paramount's *ISLAND OF LOST SOULS* (1933), it was not until 1936 that the issue became serious enough to deter Universal from adding more horrors to its schedule. With the imminent release of Universal's *DRACULA'S DAUGHTER* (1936), a picture that touched on the subjects of lesbianism and parental abuse, British censors

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Pages 69 and 71: the original newspaper advertisements from the spook shows that revived the horror genres in 1938 and 1939.

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The cast of *DRACULA* (1931) remains remarkably in character as they pose for this publicity shot. Pictured are Bela Lugosi (Count Dracula), David Manners (John Harker), Helen Chandler (Mina Seward), Dwight Frye (Renfield), and Edward Van Sloan (Dr. Van Helsing).

went to war—with themselves. Though the BBFC seemed to be against an “Horrific” rating, local censors gladly attached the “H” label to horror films. On January 1, 1936, the London County Council announced that children under age 16 could not attend “Horrific” films. The BBFC quickly backed the “H” rating and rekindled their friendships with local censors.

Such fireworks meant horror-film production in Hollywood virtually ceased for almost three years. Several releases, including Universal’s *THE INVISIBLE RAY* and MGM’s *THE DEVIL DOLL*, hit theater screens in 1936, but no films of terror were made for the 1936-37 season. On May 6, 1936, *Variety* noted that “Universal is ringing curfew on horror picture production for at least a year . . . Reason attributed by U for abandonment of horror film cycle is that European countries, especially England, are prejudiced against this type of product. Despite heavy local consumption of its chillers, U is taking heed to warning from abroad.”

Variety also reported that Universal’s London executive warned the studio of impending problems if a battle with the censors occurred. Universal, the great manufacturer of horror from 1931-1936, stopped the assembly line. Along with avoiding horror topics, studios shunned genre performers. Boris Karloff found work in character roles, but the distinguished Englishman was no longer listed as a Universal Studios contract star, and, according to an April 6, 1938 *Variety*,

he had hit the vaudeville/live appearance trail earlier that year. Bela Lugosi, whose billing even in non-vampire roles often carried the middle name “Dracula,” disappeared from stage and screen almost entirely. “The English censor laws are trying to put a stop to horror pictures,” the actor wrote in a 1936 letter to fan Jack A. Miller. “However, if enough of my film friends would write to the studios (Universal Studios) telling them they would like to see me in good horror pictures I am sure it would help a great deal towards my success.”

Unfortunately, Lugosi was incorrect; the discord sounded by Great Britain was perhaps the only time in film history when foreign ideological input so successfully impacted the content of American movies.

Of course, horror did not disappear from the cultural fabric during the movie ban. Famed novels such as *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* were still in print, pulp magazines such as *Weird Tales* offered thrills on a monthly basis, and radio’s *THE WITCH’S TALE* brewed up gruesome stories every week during the ’36-37 and ’37-38 seasons. The genre even crept into such esteemed radio programs as *THE MERCURY THEATER ON THE AIR*. For audiences of the latter, Orson Welles and the Mercury Players performed a particularly effective adaptation of *Dracula* on July 1, 1938. The memorable program closed with Welles’ reminder that “there are wolves; there are vampires. Such things do exist!”

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Among the 1936 horror movies released just before the British ban were **DRACULA'S DAUGHTER** (ABOVE LEFT, with Gloria Holden, Otto Kruger, and Irving Pichel) and **THE INVISIBLE RAY** (ABOVE RIGHT, with Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, and Frances Drake). BELOW: Henry Hull howled again as the **WEREWOLF OF LONDON** (1935) when horror made a comeback in 1938.

Moreover, U. S. theatergoers did not forget their favorite horror-film villains. The May-June 1938 issue of *Cinema Progress* saw enough lingering interest to publish "Cold Chills and Cold Cash," a history and analysis of the horror film. The piece covered the success of Lon Chaney Sr., as well as mentioning the tremendous success of Lugosi's **DRACULA** and Karloff's **FRANKENSTEIN**.

The *New York Times* of July 17, 1938 even ran an article called "A Star's Life is Mostly Letters." It described the large numbers of fan mail that arrived in Hollywood with merely a drawing or diagram to indicate the star of intended delivery. "Sometimes the

amateur draftsmen try to convey their meaning by a snarling, ghoulish face," the author writes. "When this happens, office workers have to gamble on whether to send it to Boris Karloff, Claude Rains, or Bela Lugosi."

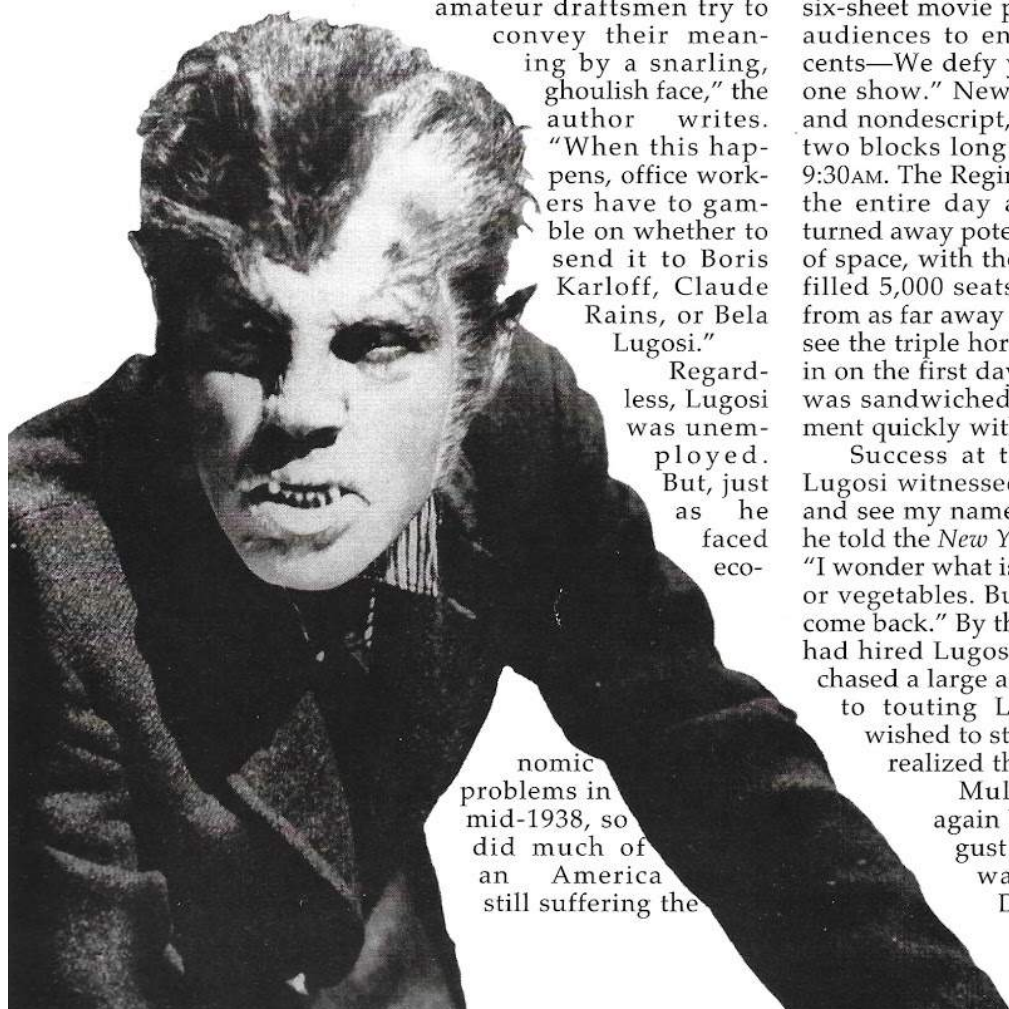
Regardless, Lugosi was unemployed. But, just as he faced eco-

bite of the Great Depression. E. Mark Umann, manager of the independently-owned Regina Theatre on Wilshire Boulevard in Beverly Hills, felt the threat of financial doom in an individual manner. Umann, who had formerly been associated with the Golden Gate Theatre of San Francisco, struggled to fill the Regina's 800-odd seats and decided to turn to the possibility of booking a cheap reissue. Only a few cinema revivals, such as Rudolph Valentino films, created audience interest, but Umann wisely chose to spend \$99 to rent three horror films: **DRACULA**, **FRANKENSTEIN**, and **SON OF KONG** (1933).

The August 6th *Hollywood Reporter* described the six-sheet movie posters outside the theater that dared audiences to enter: "Three horror pictures for 30 cents—We defy you to stand for this much horror in one show." Newspaper ads for the show were small and nondescript, yet on Thursday, August 5th, a line two blocks long was waiting to enter the theater at 9:30AM. The Regina continued to play the triple bill for the entire day and throughout the night. Umann turned away potential audience members due to a lack of space, with the house claiming it could have easily filled 5,000 seats had it had them. Spectators drove from as far away as Stockton, Fresno, and San Diego to see the triple horror show. Those who managed to get in on the first day "hissed and booed" when a cartoon was sandwiched between horror films; the management quickly withdrew it from the program.

Success at the Regina did not slow and even Lugosi witnessed the crowds. "One day I drive past and see my name and big lines of people all around," he told the *New York World Telegram* (October 17, 1939). "I wonder what is giving way to people—maybe bacon or vegetables. But it is the comeback of horror, and I come back." By the third week of the triple bill, Umann had hired Lugosi to make live appearances and purchased a large ad in the *Los Angeles Times*. In addition to touting Lugosi, the management certainly wished to stay at the front of the pack: others had realized the profits of horror.

Multiple horror films of the early '30s again breathed life at L.A. theaters. By August 10th, the La Tosca on South Vermont was running **WEREWOLF OF LONDON**, following it a week later with



economic problems in mid-1938, so did much of an America still suffering the

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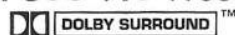
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THE RAVEN. On August 16th, audiences could also visit the Strand on South Broadway to see KING KONG. By the 20th, the Ritz in Ingelwood was screening DRACULA, while FRANKENSTEIN played the suburb of Maywood. By the 22nd, the Studio City Theater on Ventura Boulevard booked both "Drac" and "Frank," as the duo became known to thankful exhibitors. "Can you take it?" the Gordon Theatre on La Brea and Melrose asked when they screened the pair on August 26th.

Somewhat prophetically, on June 9th, the Rialto in New York City had reopened KING KONG to strong business. RKO prepared new sales material and pressbooks for the popular film and soon made over 75 advance bookings; the bulk of these were in the South and Southwest. The interest in KONG placed it in a strong position for the mounting horror revival.

Theaters in other states scrambled to obtain prints of horror films, specifically asking for DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN. Seattle's Blue Mouse Theatre opened the duo on August 24th for the "popular price" of 25 cents. Along with large ads exalting the "Mammoth Horror Show" featuring the "Two Super-Shockers of the Century," opening day's *Seattle Times* offered a large photograph of Lugosi exclaiming "Dracula Returns!" Patrons filled the Blue Mouse to capacity at each performance, and—according to an August 27th *Seattle Times*—DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN quickly surpassed the attendance records set by their initial runs. In addition to the two films, the theater added a "Horror prologue"—whatever that was—in an attempt to "frighten the audiences into enjoying the bizarre entertainment to the utmost."

Blue Mouse manager John Hamrick reported new house records for attendance. Universal Studios even used a telegram from Hamrick to a studio sales manager for an ad in the September 3rd *Motion Picture Herald*. It read: "Unable to handle crowds—opening day and second day . . . equalled first days business on DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN both on same program—combining these pictures showman's dream of good times here again."

New Orleans sought the kind of success Hamrick achieved, but the city's Tudor theater was able to secure only one of the two films. FRANKENSTEIN alone opened on September 1st, with newspaper ads following the Regina's marketing strategy. "IF . . . you cannot stand intense EXCITEMENT we advise you NOT to see FRANKENSTEIN, but . . . IF . . . you like ELECTRIFYING DRAMA, and CHILLING HORROR, you MUST NOT miss it!" Though the film stayed only a week, the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* noted large

crowds for opening night. Later that month, KING KONG played the city's Liberty Theater; by mid-October, the Joy's Strand screened Tod Slaughter's MURDER IN THE RED BARN (1935) as part of an "adults only" burlesque show titled "Night Life Whoopee."

However, a much stronger response came for Salt Lake City's Victory Theatre. The house opened DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN (the "two most blood curdling pictures ever made") at midnight on September 11th. Balcony seats were 15 cents, with those on the lower floor priced at a quarter. The theater had placed ads announcing the show in the prior



"Nevermore?" asked a soon to be unemployed Bela Lugosi of THE RAVEN (1935), questioning his questionable future in fright films. But the 1938 horror revival brought the once and future Dracula back triumphantly.

day's *Salt Lake Tribune*, and the region was well aware of the double bill. According to the October 16, 1938 *New York Times*, " . . . the house was sold out by 10 o'clock in the morning. Four thousand frenzied Mormons milled around outside, finally broke through the police lines, smashed the plate glass box office, bent in the front doors and tore off one of the door checks in their eagerness to get in and be frightened." The manager responded by renting an empty theater across the street and having reels of the films bicycled back and forth in order to accommodate more patrons. A multitude still waited in line. After a successful holdover, newspaper ads warned readers on September 17th that the show "Positively Leaves Town Tonight."

The September 10th *Variety* reported that the W.J. Edwards Burbank Theatre in Burbank, California grossed

more on a Sunday and Labor Day with the two horrors that it had during the entire previous week. By September 13th, the same trade claimed that the two set a new record for the Rivoli in Long Beach, more than doubling the opening day's business of the prior week. "Blood-Chillers Coming," the *Oregonian* advised readers in Portland on September 15, 1938. As always, the theater dared audiences to witness the double bill, with the tremendous interest causing a reporter to interview those who had seen Lugosi perform DRACULA live in 1932 on a local stage. The show ran two successful weeks at the city's Rivoli Theater.

By the end of September, the St. Louis Theater in Missouri spotlighted the "Chilling-Thrilling Double Program," proclaiming it would be the "most talked about show of this or any other year!" For those wishing to see the two films during the evening screenings after 6PM, the price increased from 25 to 35 cents. Photographs of the St. Louis Theater show large crowds forming to enter a theater heralding Lugosi's name above all else, though misspelling it "Lugsi." The theater scored remarkable business until the show left on

Continued on page 80

Book Ends

The Scarlet Street Review of Books

VIDEOHOUND'S VAMPIRES ON VIDEO

J. Gordon Melton
Visible Ink Press, 1997
335 pages—\$17.95

Though clearly dedicated to those films inspired by Bram Stoker's infamous progeny, *Videohound's Vampires On Video* often reminds me of another Victorian horror story—Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. On the one hand, the book is a useful reference tool for vampire fans and scholars alike; on the other, it is rife with grammatical errors, typos, and out-and-out factual misinformation.

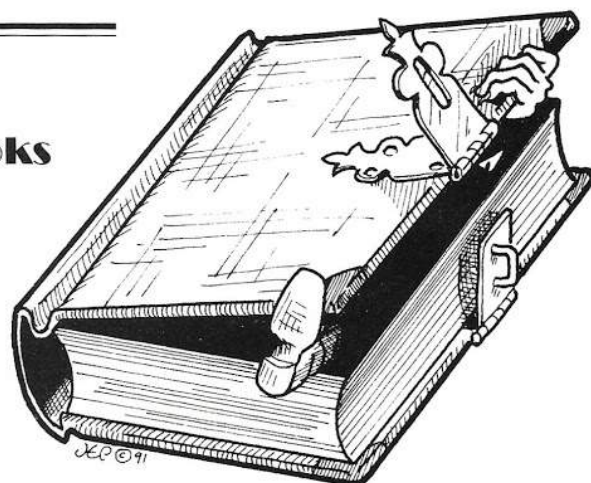
On the upside, the book is obviously intended to fill a gaping hole in film reference—never before have so many vampire and vampire-themed movies been listed and discussed in one mass-market volume. Even the very latest flicks, such as 1996's *FROM DUSK TILL DAWN*, are included. In addition to summarizing every film even remotely concerned with vampirism, author Melton sets out to provide release dates, running times, production companies, major cast and crew credits, and a guide to video availability. Melton utilizes a bone-shaped symbol to rate the films, awarding four bones to the very best fangfests, fewer bones to lesser efforts, and "Woof!" to indicate the worst dogs in bloodsucking cinema history.

In terms of inclusiveness, Melton wins high marks—he is especially useful at noting foreign and underground efforts. Kudos also to art

director Mary Krzewinski, who has designed one of the most visually pleasing reference books ever published. One of the yardsticks by which I measure the value of film books is the number of rare or never before seen pictures included; in this area, *Vampires On Video* succeeds admirably.

Yet the many wonderful qualities of the book are undermined by the worst proofreading job I have ever encountered in a professionally published text. Whoever edited this book should be fired and banned from the publishing industry forever! Almost every other page contains a misspelled word, a comma splice, or other mechanical shortcoming. I expect a few typos to slip into even the most carefully studied manuscript, but this is pitiful!

Of course, a work such as this is of interest for the information it contains, not its level of grammatical correctness; yet even here *Vampires On Video* is lacking. You know you're in trouble when the very first entry (ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN/1948) contains this passage: "... the movie did serve to strengthen the modern vampire myth through its effective scene showing the death of Dracula, who is consumed by the first rays of the rising sun." Of course, anybody who has ever seen the film in question—virtually every film fan on the planet—knows that Bela Lugosi's vampire king is



drowned by Lon Chaney's Wolf Man at the rousing climax of the picture.

An even worse example is contained in the summary of *HOUSE OF DARK SHADOWS* (1970). Fans of the famed Gothic soap opera will suffer massive coronaries as they read that Barnabas Collins is 375 years old, that he falls in love with Carolyn Stoddard (Kathryn Leigh Scott), and that Lara Parker plays Victoria Winters. In reality, Barnabas is 175 years old and cares for Carolyn (played by Nancy Barrett, not Scott) only as a convenient snack; Lara Parker does not even appear in the film! These examples are the most egregious in the book, but others abound.

The use of "funny" captions to accompany illustrations is more insulting than humorous; hopefully they were added at the publisher's insistence and over the objections of the author. And while this might seem nit-picky, I was annoyed to find a number of films listed that are not on video, contrary to the book's title. In far too many entries, question marks feebly take the place of unknown running times or other data.

I am very glad somebody took the time and trouble to prepare such a reference tool, and fans of Melton's 1994 tome, *The Vampire Encyclopedia*, will probably be able to take the mistakes in stride. For my money, however, *Videohound's Vampires On Video* is a painful mockery of what could have been: namely, the best vampire movie resource ever published. What a disappointment!

—Jonathan Malcolm Lampley

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LON CHANEY, JR.
Don G. Smith
 McFarland & Co., 1996
 236 pages—\$32.50

"... of all the great horror film stars, both fans and critics afforded him the least respect. While entire books were devoted to the others, Chaney remained neglected."

Don G. Smith has devoted himself to correcting this neglect in an exhaustive and affectionate portrait of an actor who, though famous as the originator of the Wolf Man, has been previously dismissed as a narrow, one-note performer, and a bit of a buffoon. As Smith persuasively argues, "If limited, why was he cast as both monster and monster hunter, as both cowboy and Indian, as both gangster and sheriff, and as both dimwit and university professor? If monotonous, why was he able to work successfully under the direction of such luminaries as King Vidor, Cecil B. DeMille, Lewis Milestone, Fred Zimmerman, Raoul Walsh, Michael Curtiz, Roger Corman, and Roy Del Ruth?"

When Lon Chaney Jr., born Creighton Tull Chaney, entered the world, his father, Lon Chaney, the legendary Man of a Thousand Faces, was just another actor in a traveling Repertory Company, and the baby was nurtured in the truly

horrific living conditions common to itinerant actors at the turn of the century. The author paints a grim picture of this period, including Lon Jr.'s recollection of the elder Chaney dancing outside saloons for food money. The child grew up rough, and that several of his less attractive habits were probably engendered during this period.

Also included in this book are some unsubstantiated stories detailing the senior Chaney's coldness and brutality toward his son, and the son's repressed homosexuality, both vigorously denied by his family. It is an established fact that Creighton, as he was then called, was taken away from his alcoholic mother at an early age, and told that she was dead, a lie which would be hard for any son to forgive his father. He was also actively discouraged from choosing acting as a career, so effectively that he did not pursue it until two years after his father's death.

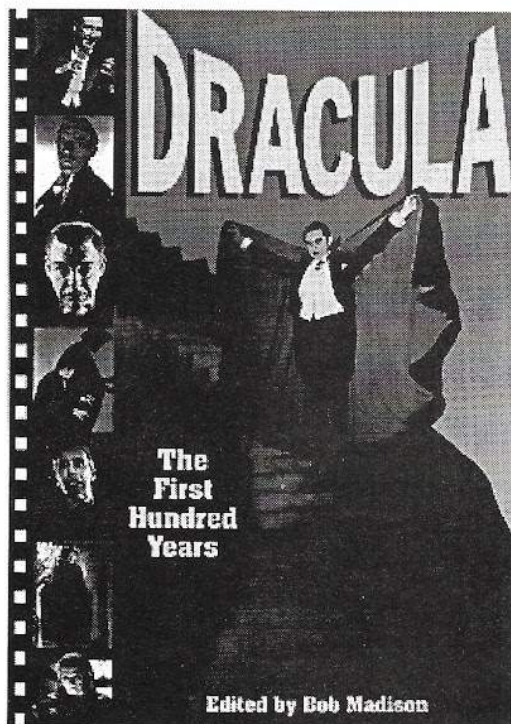
Despite the author's admiration for his subject, he remains mostly objective in his assessments, noting that Creighton Chaney was not a natural talent, and had to learn his craft as an RKO contract player in serials and westerns. As Chaney said in a later interview, "I was in a new picture practically every two weeks, always as a heavy. I'll swear

I spoke the line, 'So you won't talk, eh?' at least 50 times, and I'd rather not think about how often I had to say, 'Don't shoot him now—I have a better plan!'"

Creighton's time with RKO gained him little more than a failed marriage and the beginning of a reputation as a drinker. When he signed a contract with the Fox Studio, he signed it "Lon Chaney Jr.," a career move he had previously vowed never to make, not wanting to trade on his father's name. Curiously enough, his breakthrough role originated on the stage, a medium he had never worked in before, when he took over the role of Lennie in the West Coast production of John Steinbeck's masterpiece, *OF MICE AND MEN*. As Smith notes of the opening night, "When he walked on stage that evening, he gave the performance of his life and garnered 14 curtain calls." When United Artists filmed the play, Chaney repeated his success, to such an extent that he had to fight type casting for the rest of his life, being continually offered some variation of the dim, dangerous, yet pathetic Lennie.

This occurred, of course, before Chaney's reign as one of Universal Studio's horror stars, a period

Continued on page 81



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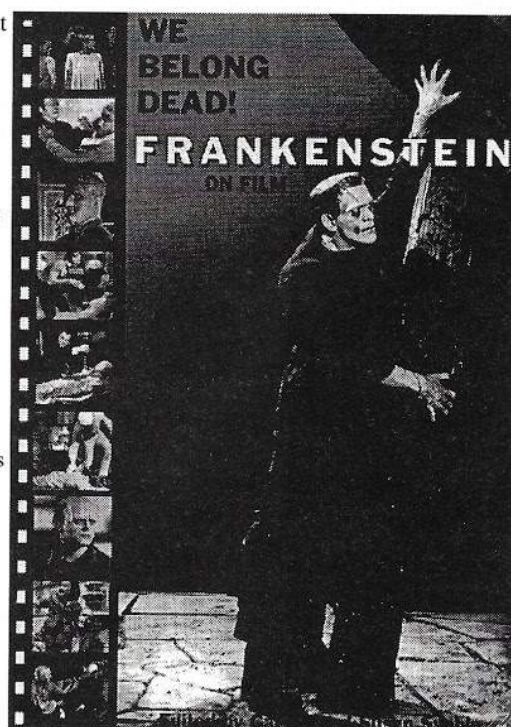
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LIZARD'S LEG

Continued from page 67

politics, and carries her off to a Justice of the Peace. On the way, Molly catches a glimpse of the Frankenstein Monster, flanked by the Wolf Man and Lorre in a swirling cape. She faints dead away, and the three actors conclude to their mutual satisfaction that the classic old monsters still have what it takes. After Stiles introduces his three new friends to a bemused and shaken Murdoch, the latter finally agrees to share the remaining 39 secretaries.

Viewed through adult eyes, then or now, "Lizard's Leg and Owlet's Wing" suffers somewhat from a weak teleplay. Several scenes involving dialogue between male and female principals (Maharis, Jones-Moreland, and Gracie; Maharis and Riley; Riley and Karloff) strike the viewer as inert. In one bit of dialogue, Murdoch compares Lila to a drill-sergeant, but, to this viewer, Jones-Moreland is not plain enough to invite such a comparison. In fact, she looks positively terrific. The superb actress Martita Hunt (1960's Hammer classic *THE BRIDES OF DRACULA*) is wasted in a small role. Hunt plays Mrs. Baxter, legal and financial counsel to the secret society of Lorre, et al. At one point Chaney Jr., clad as Kharis the Mummy, bolts from a coffin in an unsuccessful attempt to frighten the jejune woman.

The occasions of weak dialogue are surprising given that the producer of *ROUTE 66*, Stirling Silliphant, ordinarily wrote good teleplays. Silliphant, of



Costumed for the last time as Frankenstein's Monster, the King of Horror, Boris Karloff, towers over *ROUTE 66* costars Lon Chaney Jr. (costumed as the Wolf Man), Martin Milner, George Maharis, and Peter Lorre (costumed as—gasp!—Peter Lorre!)

1960's *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED* fame, recently completed a very fine adaptation of Truman Capote's *THE GRASS HARP*, though the screenplay for 1967's *IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT* probably represents his finest hour. Nevertheless, there are some nice moments, too, such as when Milner and Lorre have a laugh together over the discovery that, deep down, "nobody's all good." And it is hard not to be moved when one observes Chaney Jr. (in his father's role of Quasimodo, the Hunchback of Notre Dame) tucking grandson Ron into bed, or gentleman Karloff comforting a young damsel in distress. (So this is what the *THRILLER* host is like in real life!) For his part, Lorre effortlessly steals scene after comic scene.

I still feel something approaching awe coupled with sadness whenever I watch "Lizard's Leg," and wonder whether I am the only 40-something who discovered a new world of gods and monsters that night. But, then,

who among us would not have loved the opportunity to have been in the presence of those three giants, to have addressed them, like Stiles and Murdoch, as Mr. Lorre, Mr. Karloff, and Mr. Chaney? Such is the experience one may have vicariously through repeated viewing of "Lizard's Leg and Owlet's Wing." And this, for all its weaknesses, is the real point of the episode—to pay homage to the classic movie menaces, and to the very real human beings who portrayed them without peer.



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The legendary star of *KING KONG*, *THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME*, *DOCTOR X*, *THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME*, *THE MYSTERY OF THE WAX MUSEUM*, and *THE VAMPIRE BAT* talks to *Scarlet Street* in an exclusive chat! Don't miss the next issue of *the Magazine of Mystery and Horror*!



Charley's in over his head, but the possibility of Amy biting off more than she can chew is remote!

FRIGHT NIGHT

Continued from page 55

FRIGHT NIGHT ends with appropriate ambiguity, as Charley and Amy return to his bed. As they start to make love, ignoring the TV image of Peter Vincent (who is once more on the air with FRIGHT NIGHT THEATER), red eyes appear in the window of the darkened house next door. The voice of Evil Ed rises in a taunting cackle: "Aaaah, hah hah hah hah hah hah! You're soooo coooool, Brewster!"

But didn't we see Ed, in werewolf form, destroyed by Peter Vincent, the Great Vampire Hunter? We did indeed, but Peter got sentimental as he watched the dying, suffering neo-vampire revert to the form of a

vulnerable, naked boy. Peter forgot a basic rule, known to vampire hunters from Abraham Van Helsing to Buffy: don't pull out the stake! Those monsters, in real life or in the movies, are not what they seem—and they never want to stay dead.



HIM AND ME

Continued from page 40

fantasy.) Perhaps the real moment of truth came on a trip to London, when I was given the chance to try on one of Christopher Lee's original Dracula capes. Now, Christopher Lee is about seven feet tall (or something); I'm five-six. Nonetheless, I pulled the thing on and dragged it over to a full length mirror to get a good look at my transformed, Dracula self.

It was pretty pathetic. It looked like one thing on Christopher Lee, but on me it resembled . . . well, a collapsed circus tent. I learned an important lesson: short guys can't wear capes, but we can write books about people who do.

For me, Dracula has always had specific associations with very personal themes of sex and death, which some of you will relate to, and others won't. But it's the essence of Dracula's genius for survival to be all things to all people, a cultural as well as fictional shape-shifter. Dracula himself may be a novelist's fantasy, but his legacy in popular culture is tangible and real. To his presence, influence and meaning, attention must be paid.

I'll be loyal to you, master. I'll be loyal.



This is an excerpt from the new book Dracula: The First 100 Years, edited by Bob Madison, and published by Midnight Marquee Press.

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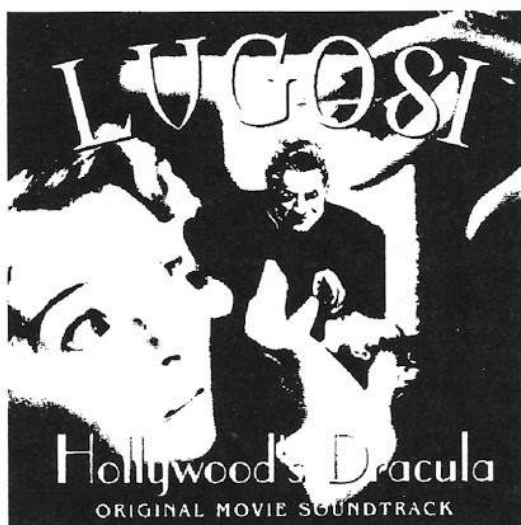
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CRIMSON

Continued from page 15

recall the two tiny princesses who sang the song about "Mosula." Two Japanese girl fans at the conference went up on a stage and repeated the performance for us.

We were showered with bouquets of flowers, gourmet banquets, the least of which had 22 courses with five soups, and the most spectacular, 37 courses with seven soups! I passed on the black chicken, little eels, oriole's eggs, and monkey balls (?), but there were plenty of delicacies for the American palate. But no chop suey or chow mein—"those American invention." On the last night of all, all by myself in the teeming city of 12 million, I walked the streets of "the Champs-Élysées of Beijing" to a place where I had the gourmet dinner to end all gourmet dinners for an American appetite: a hamburger, French fries, apple tart, and coffee, topped off with a vanilla ice cream cone—MacDonald's!

Before TV cameras, I cut the ribbon in a hotel for a one-man sci-fi art show. I brought videocassette copies of THINGS TO COME, ME-

TROPOLIS, JUST IMAGINE, THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, IT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE, THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD, and several other scientific classics to astound the eyes of the eager audiences. I was constantly interviewed by radio, television, newspaper, and magazine reporters.

On the last day, I got up in Beijing at 6AM and, 20 hours later, was in my bed with numb buns in the Ackermansion. I do not think I shall pass that way again in what is hopefully left of my last 20 years of life, but it was an unforgettable Ackperience. Just call me Acker (China)Man.

DAVID MANNERS

Continued from page 48

DM: Looks like it. Looks like he's eating them! (Laughs) Oh, well, somebody brought it and left it.

SS: Is the star of *THE BLACK CAT* a cat person?

DM: Oh, I love cats. I always had a cat, when I had a house to keep them in . . .

SS: There are no pictures of you here in your room.

DM: Thank heavens!

SS: That's the way you like it?

DM: I'm getting rid of things. I have been getting rid of everything and now I'm happy.

SS: How did you learn that lesson?

DM: By having too much, of course! Well, it's time to say goodbye. The interview is over.

SS: Can I send you anything from New York?

DM: How about a skyscraper? You can stand it in the corner there!

SS: You really are feisty today. I want to thank you for giving me the chance to talk with you.

DM: Before I die, you mean?

SS: Are you planning on dying?

DM: I was yesterday. But I don't know . . . I feel a little differently today.

Rick McKay was recently awarded "Outstanding Journalist of 1997" in San Francisco and is working on his first book. Visit his web page at <http://members.aol.com/rickmckay> or e-mail him at rckmck@aol.com —he loves hearing from readers.



A HUNGER FOR HORROR

Continued from page 74

October 13, nabbing over \$8,000 in the first three days.

Newspaper ads for St. Louis exemplify what must have been a logistical problem. Press materials for the six-year-old horror films must have been scarce, with the studio scrambling to print more to meet the demand. The first week's ads in St. Louis, despite their large and imposing size, were merely text without artwork. Studio press sheets apparently didn't arrive at the Missouri theater until the second week of the bill. Nevertheless, success at the St. Louis prompted six other theaters in the city to screen the dual bill immediately after October 13th.

Trade publications continued to note the fortunes that DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN found in America's theaters. *Variety* reported on October 5th that the Fox Upton in Kansas City achieved tremendous results, as had Denver's Rialto, which played the films for two straight weeks. The Plaza in Worcester, Massachusetts, the Family in Des Moines, and many others screened the movies to phenomenal success. San Francisco's Orpheum hit \$2,300 on opening day, and the Poli Theatre in Waterbury, Connecticut "played to 6,500 admissions in a 3,800 seat house on opening date." In New Jersey, Trenton's State Theater beat their house record for an opening day by \$204, and the Terminal in Newark reported their biggest Saturday in three full years. The Warner's in Fresno rebooked the duo as soon as the bill finished, scheduling the first repeat engagement in the history of that theater. Small-town theaters that managed to obtain prints made an equal success of them, with the Cozy Theatre in Pittsburgh, Kansas opening to twice the business they had attracted with other Universal features of 1938.

On October 17th, the two films opened at New York City's Rialto in Times Square. The newspaper ads, large and apparently unique to the theatre, remained consistent only in daring "you to see it." The premiere generated not just the best business the New York theater had seen in over a year, but—according to an October 18th *Hollywood Reporter*—the second biggest opening in its history. Receipts totalled over \$2,000, and the Rialto remained open all night . . . a first in their history.

In his book *Merely Colossal: The Story of the Movies From the Long Chase* (Simon and Schuster, 1953), Arthur Mayer recalled the horror show's success: "We made Broadway history by double-features DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN. Previously, theater bookers had always assumed that desirable movie entertainment required a well-balanced bill . . . comedy with romance, or adventure with music . . . but we jammed the Rialto for several weeks with these two old horror films that had formerly played every shooting gallery in town. Incidentally, this was our only violation of one of our pet slogans, 'Not such a good picture, but only one.'"

Chicago's Garrick Theater bettered their ad catchlines on October 19th by warning audiences to be sure they could "take it," offering "emergency ambulance and first aid" to those who couldn't. The Garrick's ads were among the more interesting printed during the revival, though after the first day Lugosi's name again was misspelled; this time he was "Bella." "Crowds Chill-Thrill To This All Horror Show," the theater claimed, mentioning in some publicity that the double bill had "Chicago Aghast." As more horror film double bills hit town, ads for the Garrick reassured cinemagoers that DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN were still the "greatest of all double horror shows." From the Garrick, the bill moved promptly to the city's Riviera Theatre, lining up crowds through the Halloween season.

Artistic blood dripped from the names DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN for the RKO Boston's "Horror Show of the Century" advertisements in the *Boston Globe*. Brave and consistent audiences kept the films at the theater for a well-touted holdover. In Houston, the Metropolitan and Majestic theaters hosted the "greatest of all horror pictures." Thousands of potential audience members were turned away from late-night screenings held at the high price of 50 cents a ticket. To help accommodate the overflowing crowds, the management—challenging Houstonites to "sit through two hours of horror"—kept the Kirby, a third theater hall, open and ready to run the films.

Both Atlanta's Paramount and Dallas' Majestic booked the duo for the week of Halloween. As a solo attraction, FRANKENSTEIN had already played Atlanta's Empire on September 11-12th; it was when combined with DRACULA, however, that theaters placed sizeable ads in the papers and the press noted huge crowds. When the duo began in Atlanta on October 25th, theater manager Tommy Read promised would-be viewers, "You will be entertained as never before when you see them together." According to the October 27th *Atlanta Constitution*, "Atlantans accepted the Paramount's dare and turned out in large numbers" to see what was advertised as "The Double Horror Show of All Times."

Interestingly, the newspaper commented on the order in which the Paramount screened the two films. Except for the Californians who railed against a cartoon inserted between the films, seldom were such questions discussed in the press. In this case, the *Constitution* mentioned that "DRACULA was shown first but it made FRANKENSTEIN an anticlimax. The management said it was going to reverse the arrangement." Such a response from theatergoers is particularly curious, since—during FRANKENSTEIN's first release in late 1931 and early '32—comparisons between it and

DRACULA by viewers and critics generally offered stronger reactions to the Karloff film.

For their appearance in Dallas, an October 28th *Dallas Morning News* spoke to the double bill's success, calling it the "result of an experiment." Dallas' Majestic theater conducted the experiment, screening DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN only twice as spook shows; Tyrone Power in SUEZ (1938) appeared on the Majestic screen at normal show times that week. The city's Melba theater—owned by the same operators—also offered the spook shows, which took place at midnight on October 29th and 31st. Ads for both evenings were obviously designed in Dallas; those for the second program even offer a description of the first: "Thousands filled BOTH the Majestic and Melba to overflowing Saturday midnight and thrilled to the mammoth horror show of the generation AND THOUSANDS MORE WERE TURNED AWAY."

If crowds were so big in Dallas, however, why would theaters have screened the films only a few times? Along with a shortage of press materials, the number of prints were low throughout that autumn. Ads in a September 3rd *Motion Picture World* excitedly pronounced "Ready Now! Prints from Universal!" along with announcing the availability of "ads, billposting paper, window cards, [and a] trailer from National Screen!" Still, prints must have been fewer than the demand. Trades kept theaters abreast of Universal striking additional copies, such as the report of another 500 prints in *Variety's* October 10th issue. The result of the shortage meant that many willing exhibitors couldn't obtain show prints until after the Halloween season.

BOOK ENDS

Continued from page 76

which Don Smith delves into at great length. In fact, there is not a period in the actor's life, including his suicide attempt in 1948, that the author does not shine a searchlight on. He gives the impression of having seen all the movies he writes about, is not shy about giving his opinion of them, and has interviewed many of Chaney's coworkers, such as writer Curt Siodmak and actor Robert Quarry, as well as many others not as well remembered. He has also explored Chaney's large body of TV work, including what had to be an hilarious turn with Boris Karloff and Peter Lorre on ROUTE 66 (see—appropriately—page 66), as well as his notorious 1952 attempt at Frankenstein's Monster on live television, during which "... Lon incredibly walked through the live broadcast believing it was the final dress rehearsal ... (He) carefully picked up and put down break-away props that he was supposed to be smashing."

In a book as well researched as this one, any inconsistency shines

forth like a flare, and there is one, namely the exact date Creighton Chaney became Lon Chaney Jr. As noted above, he signed a contract with Fox using the latter name, "Near the end of 1937." In the excellent filmography at the end of the book, however, he is credited as Lon Chaney Jr. for THE SINGING COWBOY, a picture made for Republic in 1936. To further confuse the issue, there is a photo of a title card for A SCREAM IN THE NIGHT (1935) which includes Chaney holding a sign that says "Featuring Lon Chaney Jr." It might have been better to exclude the photo, which does nothing for Lon and only baffles the reader.

Such quibbles, however, cannot detract from a biography that is both searching and compassionate, etching a portrait of an underrated character actor who suffered under a triple curse: a great father, a great role, and a great addiction. It deserves a place on bookshelves next to the volumes on Karloff, Cushing, Lugosi, Price, and all those who are gone but will never be forgotten.

—Ken Schactman

The November 4th edition of the *Washington Post* told readers that "Horror is Rampant On RKO-Keith Screen." The "horror week" in D.C. began on the 3rd, using studio press materials for advertisements. ("Remember! There really are such things!!") Columnist Nelson Bell wrote in the November 4th *Washington Post*: "If that is the sort of thing you like, there it is. Great crowds seem to be highly edified and hugely excited by it yesterday. I wouldn't be sure that I was one of them, even the second time around!"

Dust Bowl Oklahomans in Tulsa were also served the "two greatest super-shockers ever brought to the screen" in early November. Though the show began for 20 cents on November 3rd, by the 6th the price of admission had been raised to a quarter. Though successful, the Tulsa and Washington D.C. runs either did not rate holdovers or could not hang on to prints. Oklahoma City, the other metropolitan center of the Sooner state, apparently found itself unable to book the duo, as no theater screened the films during 1938.

For fans hungry for horror, though, that proved not to be a problem. The revival indeed marked the return of the horror genre, not merely DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN. These two films were duplicated at theaters nationally because of their initial success at the Regina, capturing audiences with their recognizable titles and stars. However, it was the genre as a whole that made audiences clamor ... not merely the "freak dual revival" as the September 13, 1938 *Variety* dubbed DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN.

Continued next issue . . .

THE MEN WHO MADE THE MONSTERS

Paul M. Jensen

Twayne, 1996

406 pages—\$19.95

At a time when books surveying vintage horror and sci-fi movies are trending toward tired exercises in nostalgia and rehashed facts, Paul M. Jensen's *The Men Who Made the Monsters* offers a hearty draft of relief. Though it would seem that the last word had long been written about the directors (James Whale, Terence Fisher, Freddie Francis) and animators (Willis O'Brien, Ray Harryhausen) profiled here, Jensen proves that this is not the case. Combining a solid foundation of research and formidable critical skills, the author has penned a genre study that's unique and easily one of the best.

Jensen provides an excellent overview of each artist, critiquing each film with amazing depth, but never losing sight of the individual under study. Writing sensitively, sometimes even movingly, Jensen

Continued on page 82

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Barkus is getting impatient

BOOK ENDS

Continued from page 81

fleshes out the real person from the concise biographical material, demonstrating how the subject's personality, passions, and idiosyncrasies trickle into the final cut. Jensen has a keen grasp of how photography, lighting, editing, and music manipulate the viewer's emotions, but his major theme is how even a genre film can be every bit as personal a statement of the artist as any mainstream production.

Much of this is fascinating. The life of Whale, for instance, may have been tackled with greater depth elsewhere, but few commentators have been quite as successful as Jensen in bridging the director's life with his work. Jensen brings Whale's deep-rooted insecurities,

sexual peccadilloes, and love of decor into sharp focus to show how they directly relate to his classic monster films. Surely such observations could be more obviously discerned in the case of a "hands-on" director like Whale, but Jensen does as well surveying the careers of such "directors for hire" as Fisher and Francis, cataloging recurring themes and subtleties in his pursuit to define their personal styles. While this sort of approach is often an invitation for zealots to shamelessly drumbeat for a favored director at the expense of writers, producers, etc., the commentary here is tempered with common sense and an appreciation for film as a collaborative medium.

In contrasting the fortunes of O'Brien and Harryhausen, technical

discussions are quickly disposed of in order to get to the creative heart of the films themselves. Jensen's observations of Harryhausen are particularly intriguing. By probing the themes and subtexts of his films and fearlessly tying them to Harryhausen's own life and character, the author provides us with a glimpse into the private world of this elusive technician.

Jensen is so persuasive that his occasional lapses into hyperbole are almost seamless. Still, it would be grossly unfair to begrudge this beautifully written book solely on matters of personal tastes. One hopes that future editions are in the offing; surely, the films of Val Lewton and Corman's Poe cycle would make a good starting point.

—Michael Brunas

A Monster Of A Deal!

Dracula

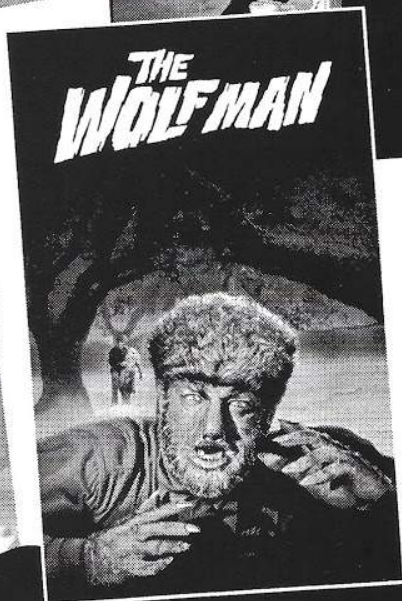


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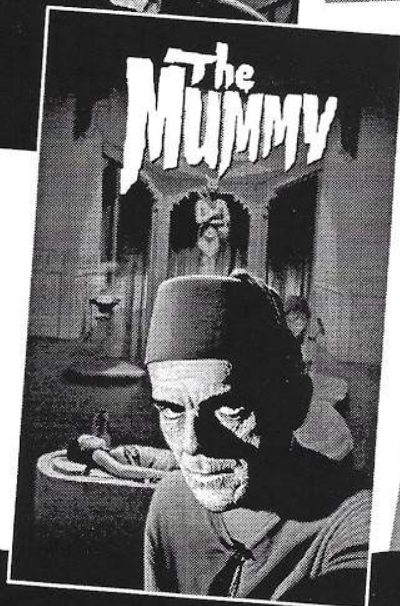
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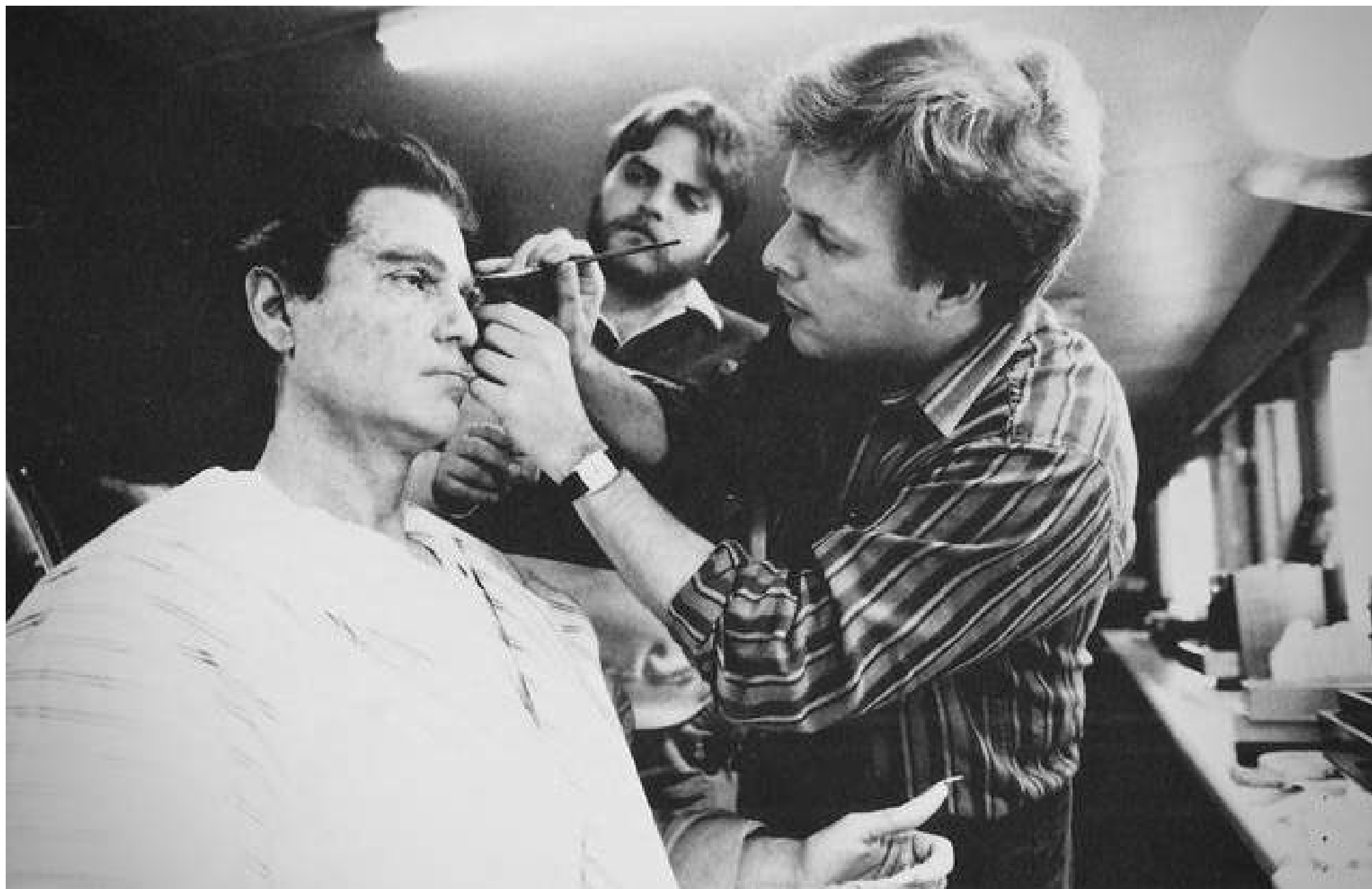
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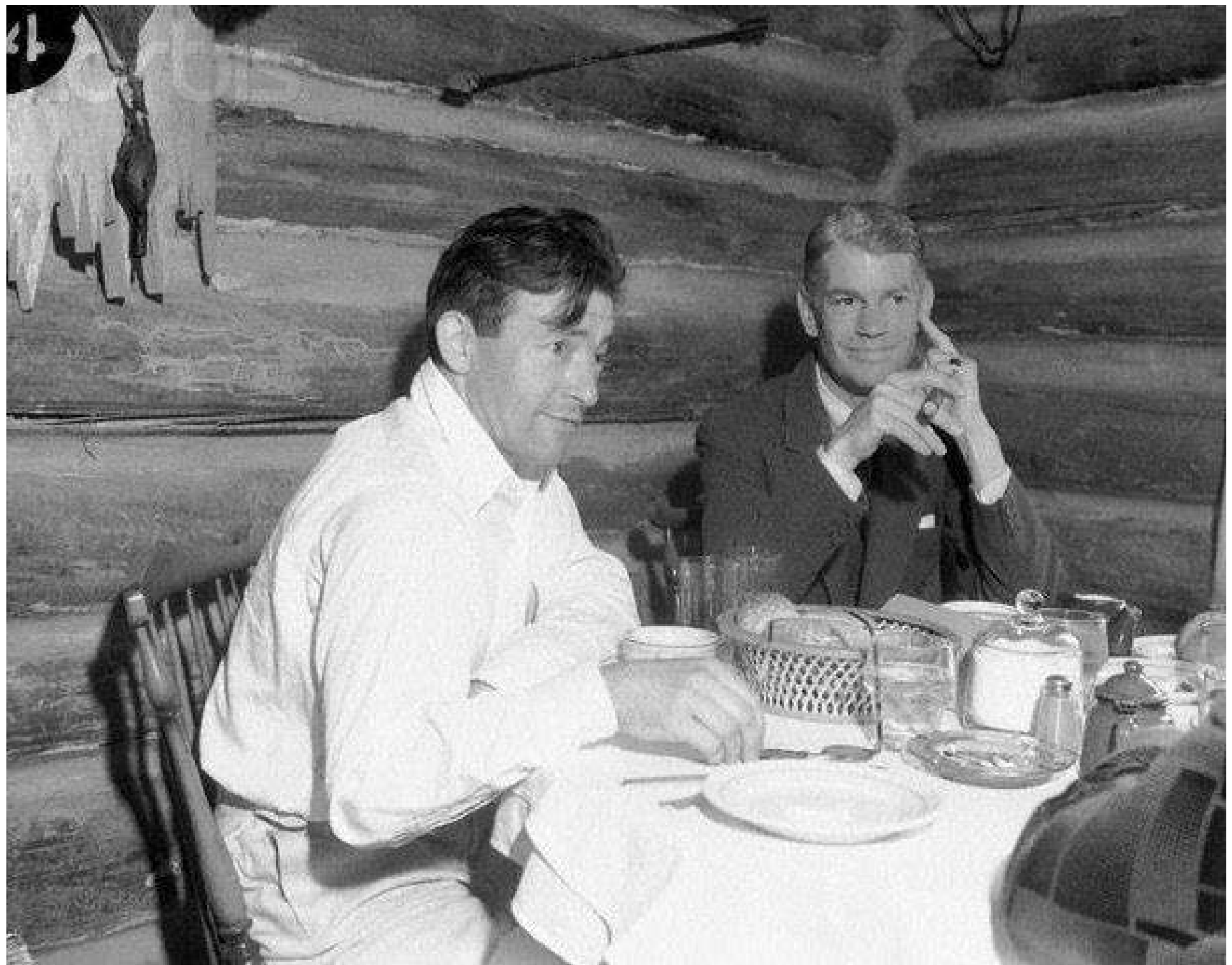


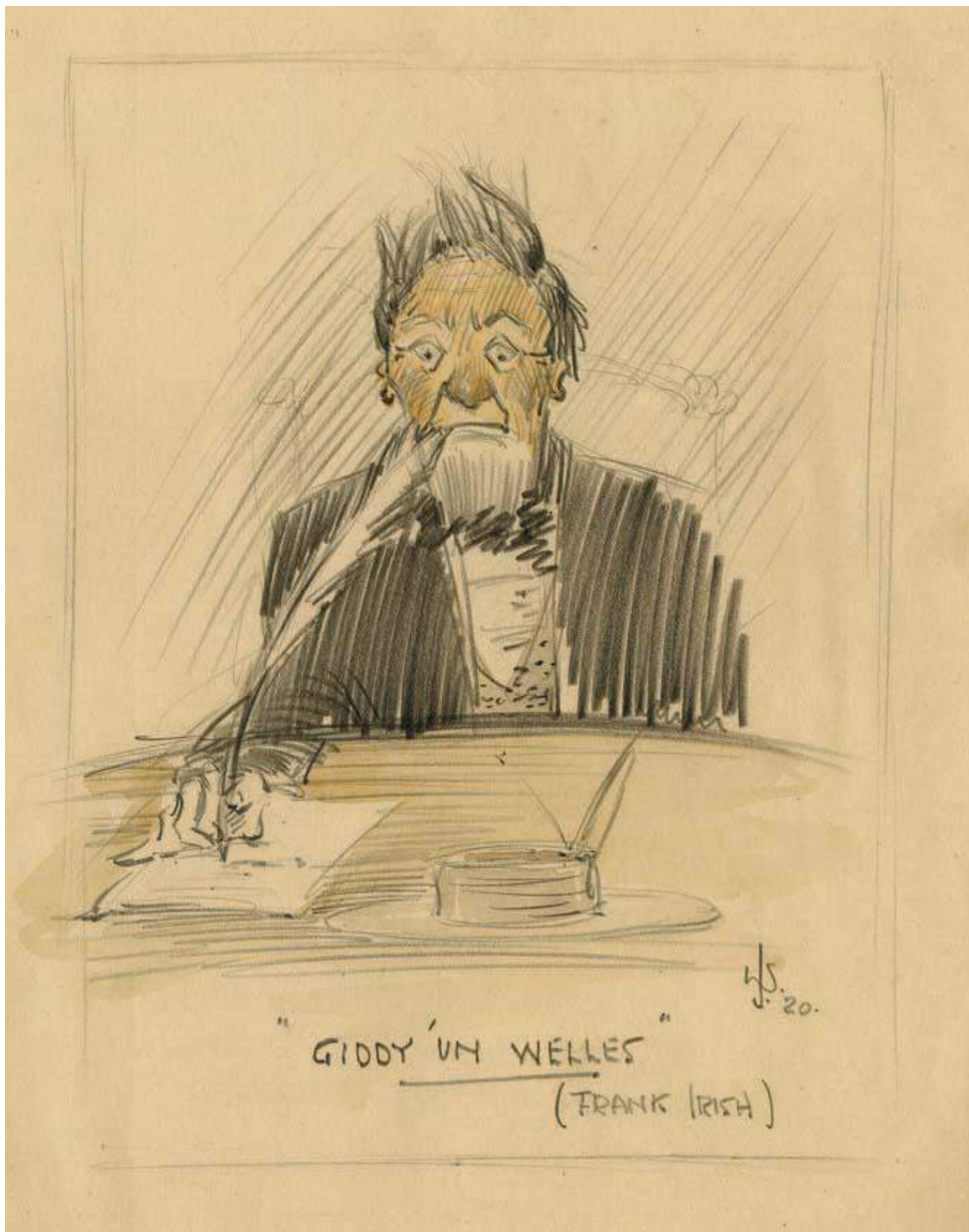










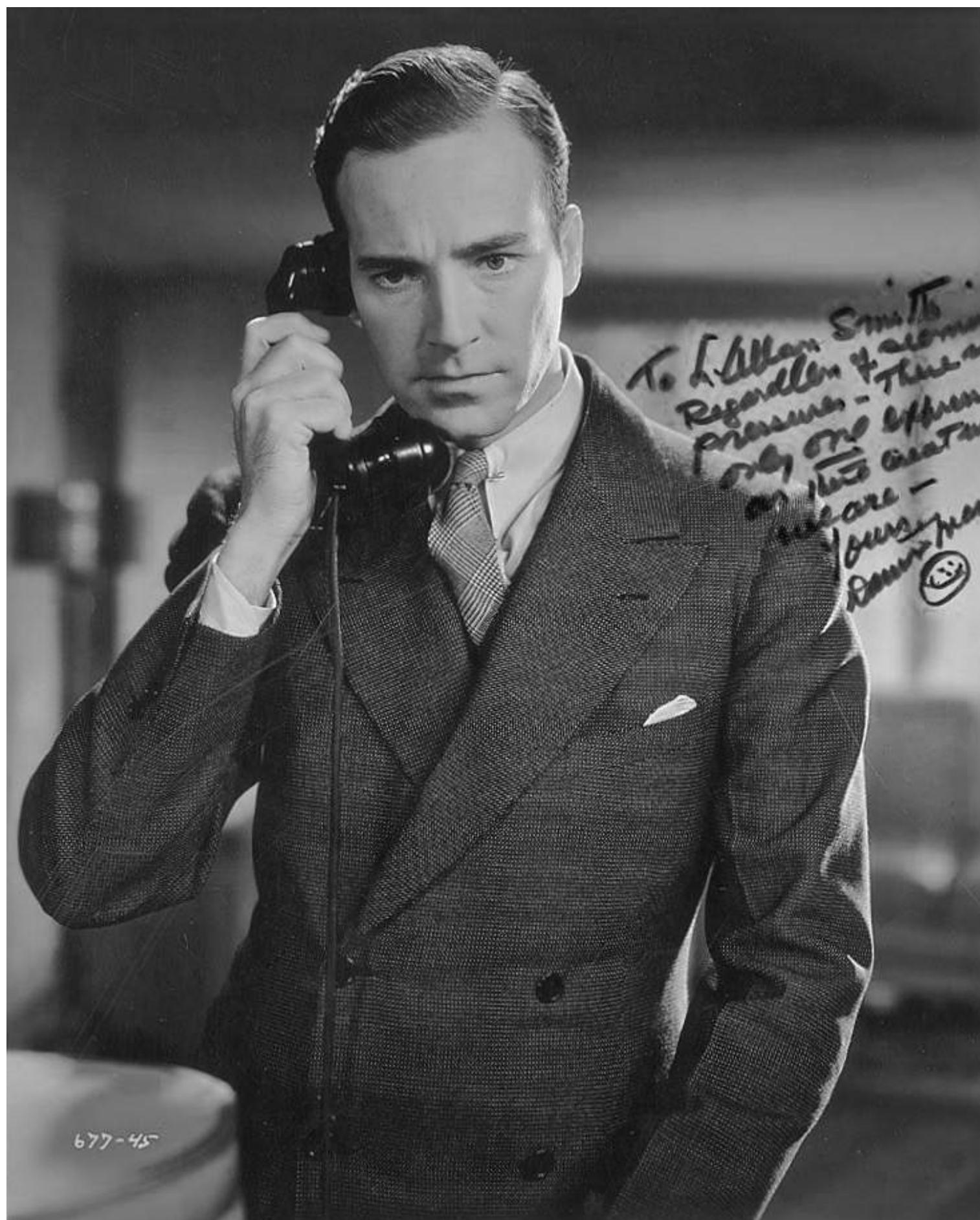






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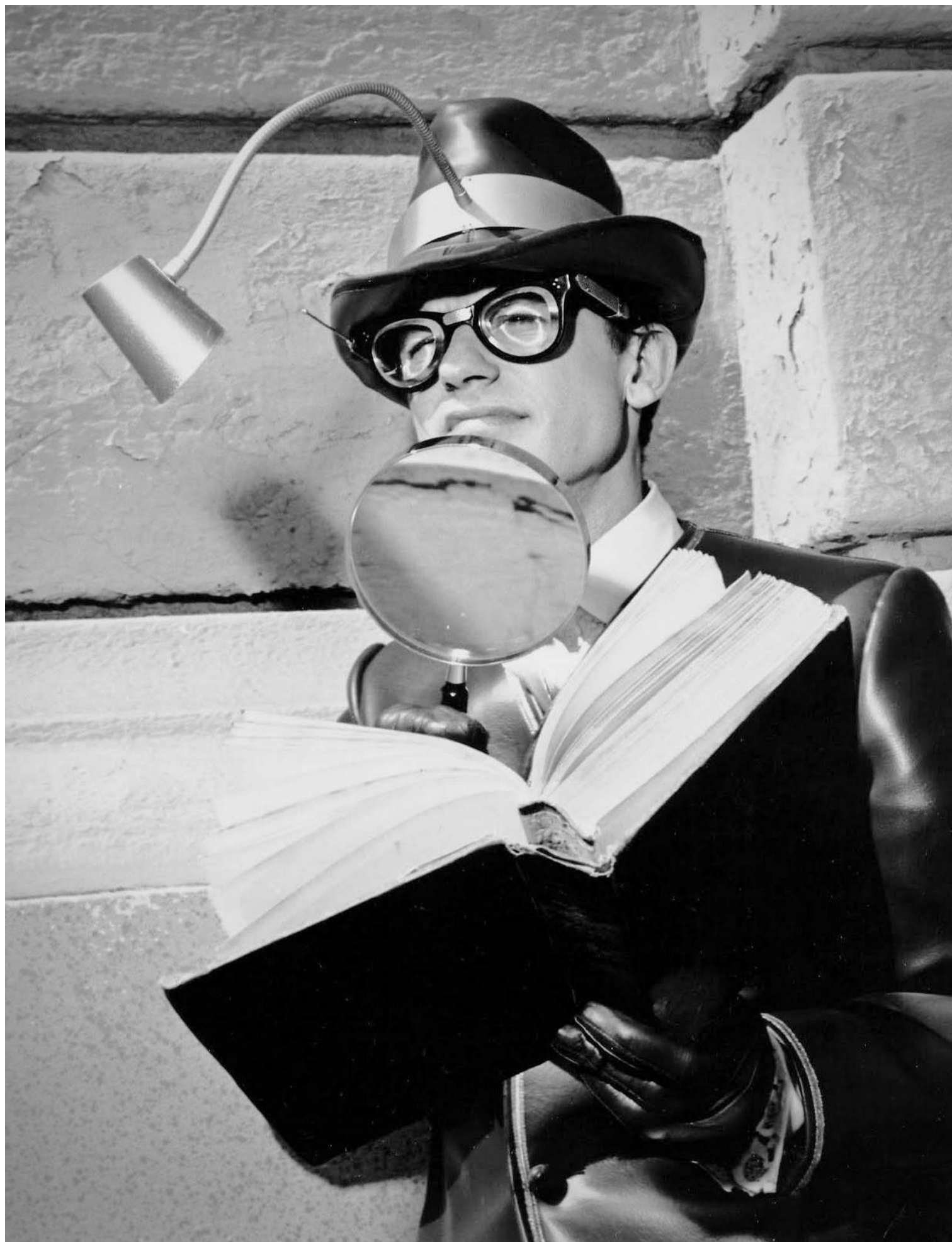


















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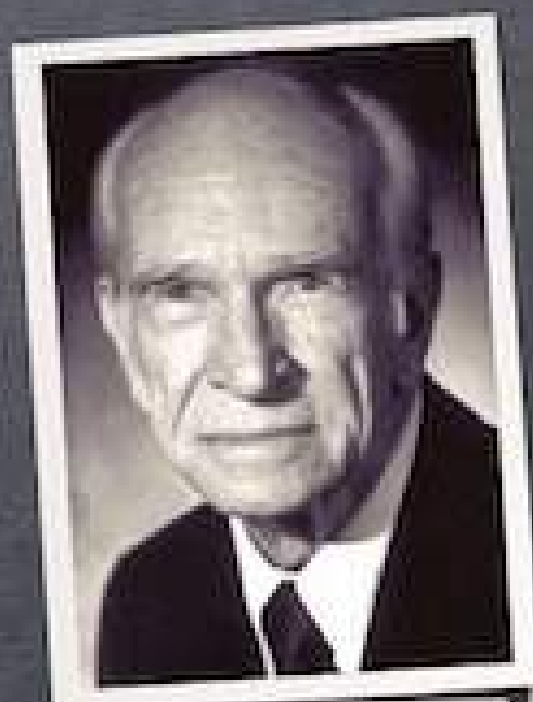






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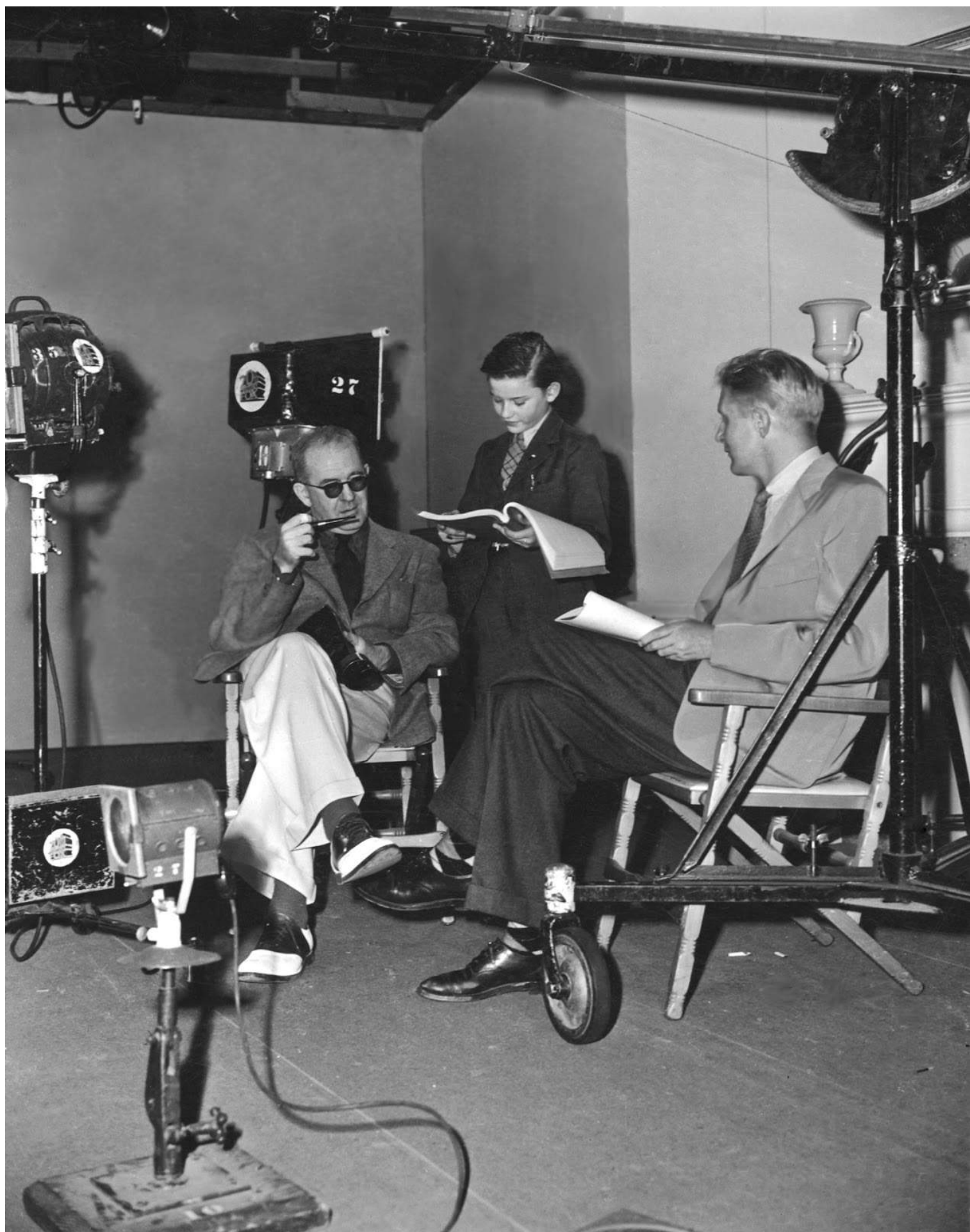
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